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A

FREE ENQUIRY

INTO THE

AUTHENTICITY

OF THE

FIRST AND SECOND CHAPTERS

OF

ST. MATTHEW'S GOSPEL.

11-00

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11-06
From the Author
A

FREE ENQUIRY

INTO THE
AUTHENTICITY
OF THE

FIRST AND SECOND CHAPTERS

OF

ST. MATTHEW'S GOSPEL:

WITH A NEW PREFACE,

CONTAINING

AN ACCOUNT OF SOME MSS.
IN THE BRITISH MUSEUM;

AND, A

DISSERTATION
ON THE ORIGINAL LANGUAGE OF
THAT GOSPEL.

THE SECOND EDITION,
Corrected, improved, and much enlarged.

By JOHN WILLIAMS, L.L.D.

*Cuncta prius tentanda, sed immedicabile Vultus
Ense recidendum, ne pars sincera trahatur.*

OID. METAM. L. I. LIN. 190.

Ista Veritas, etiamsi jucunda non est, mihi tamen grata est.

CIC. ATTIC. iii. 24.

L O N D O N:

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Page	Line	for	read
16.	last line, note, publication,		translation.

D I S S E R T A T I O N.

5.	4 from the bottom	nontam	non tam
6.	6 —————	—	OYE.
17.	2. note.	*	†.
27.	8. from the bott. note —	—	the Syriac jud s.
30.	3. —————	†	*.
32.	after 2d note, dele,	“ See the Differtation.”	

E N Q U I R Y.

17.	2. from the bott.	proemia	proemia.
28.	7. note.	Rhenam	Rhenum.
33.	2. —	γεγεννασθαι.	γεγεννησθαι.
36.	2. —	Cerenthus	Cerinthus.
45.	11. —	acknowledge	acknowledge.
46.	4. from the bott. note.		is dated.
48.	9.	*	†.
Ibid.	bottom,	dele	“ See preface.”
54.	14.	dele	“ p. 42.”
71.	3. from the bott. note	566.	506.
82.	7. —————	εγραφη.	εγραφη.
94.	1. note	Οστηρ	αστηρ.
95.	7. place a full point after “ 107.”		
108.	1. note,	evagn.	evagr.
109.	2. note, place a semicolon after “ Deo,” and a full point after Vossius.		
110.	4. from the bott. note.	principelu	principatu.
Ibid.	last note.	Sac. Tex,	Sect. Tert.
121.	5. from the bott. adoraverunt-eum, adoraverunt eum		
135.	8. note	reñion,	verñion.
Ibid.	12. note.	יל	יל.
Ibid.	14. note, place a semicolon after	תענוז.	
136.	2.	היו זרוע לבני לוט.	
146.	4. from the bott. note.	בן.	בן.
151.	4. note.	Egyyt.	Egypt.
159.	3. from the bottom.	Matthew,	Matthew.
166.	note.	139.	159.
170.	2d note.	36.	43.

SECRET

1. [Illegible]

2. [Illegible]

3. [Illegible]

4. [Illegible]

5. [Illegible]

6. [Illegible]

7. [Illegible]

8. [Illegible]

9. [Illegible]

10. [Illegible]

11. [Illegible]

12. [Illegible]

13. [Illegible]

P R E F A C E
T O T H E
F I R S T E D I T I O N.

THE following Enquiry relates to a subject of very considerable importance, on which account it may possibly gain some degree of attention.

Gentlemen of acknowledged reputation in the learned world, who are well acquainted with the subject, and whose regard for revealed religion has never yet been called in question, have expressed their approbation of such an enquiry. Nay, there are among them, persons who have published some of the best defences of Christianity now extant.

The reader may be assured that this work is the result of serious thought and application. The Author desires, therefore, that no one will condemn him for rashness or presumption, without impartially examining what is here advanced. He sincerely declares that he has no

† B

end

end in view but to serve the cause of genuine Christianity, which he firmly believes to be the cause of Truth, and of God.

Who, or what the Author is, is a matter of no consequence. If his reasonings are defective, the most celebrated name will not make them better; if they are strong and conclusive, the most inconsiderable and obscure will neither destroy nor weaken them. Should they be thought sufficient to render doubtful the credit of the first and second chapters of St. Matthew's Gospel; or should they be the means of producing stronger arguments in favour of these chapters than have hitherto appeared; either way, the end of the present performance will be answered, which is not victory, but truth.

The Author will only add, in the words of St. Augustin,

“ Errare possum, Hæreticus esse nolo.”

C. B. M.

P R E-

P R E F A C E

T O T H E

S E C O N D E D I T I O N .

IT was observed by the late learned and excellent Dr. Lardner, “ that no religion can
 “ be so absurd and unreasonable, especially,
 “ when it has been established, and of a long
 “ time, that will not find men of good abilities,
 “ not only to palliate and excuse, but also to
 “ approve, and justify, and recommend it’s
 “ greatest absurdities *.” An inconsiderable
 alteration in the mode, hath always been re-
 presented as dangerous to the state. Under this
 pretence Christianity, on its first appearance,
 was opposed by both Jews and Gentiles; the

* Vol. IX. p. 58. Edit. 1788.

reformation by the Church of Rome; under the same pretence, every alteration, or even a slight deviation from usual customs and forms, though in many cases highly proper, and at different periods highly necessary; are most commonly discountenanced, discouraged, and condemned. However well intended the design, and however modest and inoffensive the manner, the proposer is certain to meet with abuse and insult: this in no inconsiderable degree has been the fate of the author of the following performance.

Soon after the publication of the "Free Enquiry," in 1771, there appeared two answers to it. The first by the late reverend and respectable Dr. Caleb Fleming, intitled, "Free thoughts upon a Free Enquiry into the authenticity of the first and second chapters of St. Matthew's Gospel," &c. by Theophilus. The other was intitled, "The Authenticity of the first and second chapters of St. Matthew's Gospel vindicated, in answer," &c. without his name; by Mr. Velthufen, a German divine, then residing in London, but who now is settled abroad.

The remarks of these gentlemen have been carefully attended to, and those which were
thought

thought material are considered in the text, and in notes at the bottom of the pages to which they refer.

Their observations on the original language of St. Matthew's Gospel, are particularly considered in a Dissertation prefixed to this edition; in which the author presumes that the reader will find some new thoughts respecting the testimony of Irenæus to an original Syro-chaldaic Gospel by St. Matthew *.

The method taken by Mr. Velthusen to remove difficulties, and to reconcile inconsistencies will not satisfy a rational enquiring mind. As an instance, let us take his paraphrase of St. Luke ii. 39. " And after they had performed all things according to the law of the Lord, *dwelling in the mean time a while in Egypt*, they returned into Galilee, to their own city Nazareth, where Jesus passed the years of his youth †.

The

* That Irenæus was an *original* witness to this fact, the author of the Free Enquiry suggested to an eminent Scholar abroad, in the year 1778. This is mentioned to clear him from any charge of plagiarism.

† There is no authority for this addition, but what is derived from the chapters in question. Their evidence cannot be admitted on a point which immediately

The same liberty is taken by him in his paraphrase of Matthew ii. 13—16. If such a latitude be allowable, the Koran of Mohammed, may be made to speak, *almost*, the language of the New Testament.

Though the Author of the Free Enquiry has been censured and condemned by the above writers, and by others; he hath, however, the consolation of being highly approved of, and commended by several gentlemen of distinguished learning, and of acknowledged piety and goodness. “Totum, autem, me habes non
“animo solum, sed et sententia de initio Evangelii Matthæi,” are the words of one celebrated writer on the Continent, in a letter to the Author. In another letter to a gentleman of eminence in the literary world, lately deceased, the same writer, after he had perused the Free Enquiry, says, “In rei Summa Williamsæ
“accedo.”

Another gentleman well known as a scholar and a divine, thus wrote to the author. “The
“notion of two whole chapters being an in-

affected their authenticity. This paraphrase seems to have suggested to Mr. Velthusen by Dr. Lardner. Vol. VI. p. 148—9.

“terpolation,

“ interpolation, alarmed my mind, but at the
 “ same time I was determined to give your Dis-
 “ sertation an impartial examination. You
 “ have really shook my implicit belief in the
 “ two first chapters of St. Matthew’s Gospel,
 “ and have, by solid arguments, convinced my
 “ understanding, that no stress should be laid
 “ upon their authenticity. I am a person who
 “ profess myself a believer of Revelation, after
 “ a free enquiry into its awful pretensions, and
 “ am deeply persuaded that the main branches
 “ of it came from God ; notwithstanding some
 “ difficulties arising from the nature of its con-
 “ veyance through so many ages.—If you had
 “ not supported your cause by well attested evi-
 “ dence, I should, probably, have sent you an
 “ answer to your Enquiry, instead of my ap-
 “ probation.” Afterwards the same gentle-
 man adds, “ I have very little to object to your
 “ judicious Enquiry, and really think you have
 “ proved your point, which is of real service
 “ to the cause of Christianity, by freeing it from
 “ several shrewd objections made to it from
 “ these two chapters.” This gentleman also
 says, “ that he is really surprized that any
 “ doubt would ever have been made of St.
 “ Matthew’s Gospel being written in Syro-
 “ chaldaic,

“ chaldaic, as *direct evidence* is produced in
 “ confirmation of the fact.” Were I at liberty
 to mention this gentleman’s name, no objection
 would be made to his abilities and learning, to
 the clearness of his head, or to the goodness of
 his heart *.

When the Enquiry was first published the
 Author had not had an opportunity to examine
 the manuscripts in the British Museum; but
 this he hath since carefully done. A true de-
 scription, to the best of his understanding, of
 all manuscripts relative to his subject, which he
 could find there, is here faithfully given.

N^o 1802. *Harleian Manuscripts.*

1. Orditur prologus canonum quatuor Evan-
 geliorum decem minuationibus vel articulationi-
 bus distinctorum. Fol. 2. l. 1. quas Hieroni-
 mus Damaso flagitante construxit. Fol. 1.

2. Argumentum Evangelii Matthæi. Fol. 3.

* This excellent gentleman’s name may now be men-
 tioned. The Rev. William Hopkins, a clergyman at
 Cuckfield, in Suffex, lately deceased. He was an intel-
 ligent learned man, who published several valuable things
 in controversial divinity. His last publication was “ A
 “ corrected publication of Exodus, with notes, in 1784.

3. Ge-

3. Genealogia D. N. I. C. five initium Evangelii secundum Matthæum, cum notis. Fol.

3. b.

“ This, says Mr. Wanley, is written separately from the rest of the Gospel, and amongst other prefaces, as being looked upon as a preface. I have seen other ancient copies of the Evangelists, written in Ireland, or coming from books written by Irish men, wherein this sacred genealogy was not rejected, but misplaced. There would, nevertheless, appear a great distinction between it and what followed. The words, *xpi autem generatio*, being illuminated again, as if the gospel began there.”

4. De interpretatione Ebraicorum Nominum. Fol. 4. b.

5. Glossariolum quoddam Hebræo-Latinum-Hybernicum. Fol. 5. b.

6. Two notes, the former said to be taken from Gregory, and the latter from St. Hierom.

7. The prologue or preface commonly put before St. Mark, beginning with, *Marcus Evangelista Dei* *. Fol. 6.

8. The

* It is observable, that the names of Mark, Luke, and John, in this manuscript, are mentioned at the beginning of

8. The preface commonly put before St. Luke, beginning thus, Lucas Syrus natione. Fol. 6. b.

9. The preface frequently put before St. John's Gospel, beginning, hic est Johannes. Fol. 7. b.

10. Notes taken from Gregory, Bede, and Hierom. Fol. 8. b.

11. Notes wherein the Gospels, or the writers of them, are compared to liquors, elements, &c. * Fol. 9.

12. An old Irish poem concerning the twelve apostles. Fol. 9. b.

The Gospel of St. Matthew, beginning at "Christi autem generatio," finely illuminated, with a sort of interlineary gloss, and a catena patrum. Fol. 10.

This manuscript is a small quarto parchment volume, bought by the Earl of Oxford of John Aymone, in Holland, in 1709. It is Latin in Irish letters, and contains about 156 leaves.

Mr. Wanley adds, "That this manuscript is
" a standard for the Irish hand in 1139, (when

of their Gospels; but the name of Matthew is not mentioned at the beginning of his Gospel, in the same manner.

* See Section 12 of Mr. Wanley's Catalogue.

" he

“ he supposes that it was written) and one of
 “ the most authentic copies of the Latin Gos-
 “ pels which came from Ireland.” Mr. Wan-
 ley’s account of this manuscript is of considerable
 length.

N^o 2795. *Harleian.*

This is a volume entitled, “ *Evangelia qua-*
 “ *tuor rubro liquore scripta, præfiguntur prolo-*
 “ *gus quatuor Evangelior : Hieronymi epistola*
 “ *ad Damasum, Eusebii canones, cum argumen-*
 “ *to, et epistola de eisdem ; et argumenta, et*
 “ *breviaria singulis Evangeliiis. Accedit capitu-*
 “ *lare Evangeliorum pro toto anno **.”

In this manuscript the genealogy is in gold capitals, till “ *generatio sic erat,*” which words are also in gold capitals : the rest is written in red letters. It is a thick quarto volume, vellum, bound in wood, and covered with leather. The characters are the Anglo-Norman, in use about the beginning of the eleventh century.

Among the Cottonian manuscripts, in the British Museum, there is a quarto volume marked Tib. A. II. finely illuminated at the begin-

* See the Enquiry, p. 41. &c.

ning of St. Matthew's genealogy; written in gold letters, on a blue ground, till "omnes
 " ergo generationes ab Abraham;" afterwards it is written in plain letters of that age, that is, the age of Æthelstan, towards the beginning of the tenth century: that is the manuscript mentioned in p. 42 of Enquiry. Several of the manuscripts in the Cottonian library were consumed in the fire, which unfortunately happened there on October 23d, 1731.

In the transactions of the Royal Irish Academy, 1787, there is an account of a Greek manuscript copy of St. Matthew's Gospel, lately found in the library of Trinity College, Dublin.

The reverend Mr. Barret, the Librarian, endeavours to shew, that it was written in the sixth century

A gentleman, obligingly procured for me the following particulars concerning this manuscript.

" There is a very old manuscript of the
 " Gospels lately discovered by the present Li-
 " brarian, but it is imperfect. It had been de-
 " faced, and other things written over it upon
 " the vellum: But as the original writing was
 " in a large character, and had made a very
 " deep impresson on the vellum, it has been
 " almost

“ almost all made out by the very great labour
 “ of Mr. Barret, the Librarian. In that an-
 “ cient manuscript, part of the genealogy is
 “ wanting; but it is evidently owing to the
 “ tearing or wearing of the vellum; because
 “ the last part of it is still legible. I think it
 “ begins about the thirteenth verse; but
 “ there are marks of the vellum’s being torn
 “ off.”

No information concerning our Enquiry can be derived from this manuscript.

This gentleman also says, “ that there is a
 “ manuscript of one of the ancient fathers, of
 “ the genealogy, that has not been printed in
 “ his works.” But which of the Fathers he
 doth not say; nor whether this genealogy differs
 from our present copies. As I find that a for-
 mal petition must be presented to the senatus
 academicus, at, I know not, what expence,
 before a copy of it can be obtained; I shall not
 apply for one. It is to be hoped that the learned
 in that college will favour the world with an
 accurate account of it. And as this Greek ma-
 nuscript hath been so lately discovered, it is
 to be hoped also, that if it hath any various
 readings

readings we shall be made acquainted with them *.

It is impossible from these manuscripts, or from any others now extant and known, to determine, with any degree of certainty, where the Nazarene Gospel began. Whether at the 18th verse of chapter 1st, or at the third chapter. The Cerinthian Gospel, it is certain, began with the genealogy †. And the Ebionite Gospel, it is as certain, began at the third chapter. The Nazarene Gospel was nearly the same with the Ebionite, as appears from Epiphanius; but where they differed, or whether they differed at all, no one can now pretend to determine.

The Harleian manuscript, N° 1802, seems plainly to shew, that St. Matthew's genealogy was not held in much estimation in 1139; for it is separated from the rest of the Gospel by prologues, notes, and old poems. This circumstance must lead us to conclude, that no great dependance ought to be laid upon its au-

* The account of manuscripts above given, is intended only to shew that the genealogy by St. Matthew seems to have been of dubious authority for many centuries. Indeed, it seems to have been suspected in very early ages.

† See the Enquiry, p. 48—81—112.

thenticity.

thenticity. For though that was an ignorant age, yet the opinions of early times were received with the utmost submission and veneration. If the genealogy, therefore, had been considered as the genuine work of St. Matthew, the eight articles, some of which are extremely trifling, would not have been inserted where they are now found in that manuscript.

The difference between manuscripts and printed copies, ought to guard us against being too hasty in receiving into, or rejecting from, the canon, any part of the sacred writings, as they now appear. We should examine with care, and receive with caution, every thing which hath been contradicted in former, and in later ages.

Mr. Velthufen has frequently mistaken my meaning; several of his remarks, for that reason, are taken no notice of. With regard to his pamphlet, I have only to add, that a German Divine informed me, that the pamphlet, intitled, "The Authenticity of the first and second chapters, &c." was written, and printed in the German language, as a translation *from* the English; but that it really was a translation *from* the German into English.

Mr.

Mr. Townson's discourses on the four Gospels, have not been overlooked. What he hath advanced, as far as it concerns my subject, being much the same with what others have said; the reader will find considered, though his name be not particularly mentioned.

I desire my reader to be assured, that I have faithfully, to the best of my knowledge and judgment, laid before him, every argument for, and every objection against, my opinion, which I have met with. I have not, designedly or knowingly, kept back any thing. I have delayed publication for several years, though very frequently importuned, that I might have time to reconsider, and to revise every argument, observation, and objection. Horace's rule has been more than strictly adhered to; "*nonumque prematur in annum*;" for this second edition has been in hand nearly twice that number of years.

The passages referred to in the former editions of Dr. Lardner's works, are in this edition of the Enquiry, also pointed out in the late entire edition of Dr. Lardner; which, as a repository of sound, judicious, critical, scriptural learning, is invaluable.

Sydenham, Sept. 1, 1789.

A D I S.

A
DISSERTATION
ON THE
ORIGINAL LANGUAGE
OF
ST. MATTHEW'S GOSPEL.

A

DISSERTATION, &c.

BEFORE I particularly enter upon the subject of the following Dissertation, I beg leave to give my reader some extracts out of the third and much improved edition of the learned Professor Michaelis's Introductory Lectures to the sacred books of the New Testament*.

“ It is very remarkable, says he, that St. Matthew quotes passages out of the Old Testament differently from the other Evangelists. He seldom uses, as hath been observed already, the Septuagint, but frequently makes a translation of his own from the

* It is much to be lamented that the design of translating this edition by the gentleman who favoured me with these Extracts, actually failed for the want of encouragement. Proposals for the undertaking were published.

“ Hebrew. St. Jerom takes notice of this
 “ more than once. This may be thought to
 “ indicate that St. Matthew wrote his Gospel in
 “ Hebrew, and that his Greek Translator
 “ would not always be at the trouble of con-
 “ sulting the Septuagint, finding it much more
 “ convenient to translate the quotations from
 “ the Hebrew which he had before him.”

In a note the Professor says, “ Another ar-
 “ gument in favour of an Hebrew original, is
 “ furnished by Stephen Evodius Asselman, in
 “ his Bibliotheca Medicæa, page 11, which I
 “ chuse to give my readers in a note, in his
 “ own words, because I am still doubtful whe-
 “ ther it be well founded. Atque hic notan-
 “ dum, verba Christi, (Il, Il, Lamma Sabac-
 “ tani) in evangelio Matthæi (viz. the Syriac
 “ translation) carere interpretatione, eadem
 “ tamen in Marco interpretari, ex quo palam
 “ fit linguam Hebraicam qua Matthæus suum
 “ scripsit evangelium, quaque locutus Christus
 “ in terris est, Syriacam fuisse.”

“ This circumstance is, undoubtedly, remark-
 “ able; (unless we suppose that Asselman, out
 “ of love to his favourite language, would, from
 “ this incident endeavour to prove that St.
 “ Matthew wrote in Syriac.) But I cannot as
 “ yet

“ yet turn it in favour of my argument, be-
 “ cause it might happen by meer accident.
 “ The Syriac translator frequently leaves out
 “ Scholia Authentica, if he is not in want of
 “ them. He omits them in one place, and
 “ inserts them in another. This circumstance,
 “ however, deserves consideration, and the
 “ weight of it is not lessened by putting it un-
 “ der the sanction of Assleman,”

The following observations on the original language of St. Matthew's gospel, also demand attention.

P. 860. Matthew xxviii. 1. “ In the even-
 “ ing of the Sabbath, is very improper, for it
 “ is said the event happened towards morning,
 “ in the dark part of it. St. Jerom (Hedibixæ
 “ quest. 4to, T. 4. fol. 173. edit. Martianay *,)
 “ gives this solution. Mihi videtur Evangelis-
 “ tam Matthæum qui evangelium Hebraico ser-
 “ mone conscripsit, nontam vespere dixisse,
 “ quam sero : et eum qui interpretatus est, (ver-
 “ bi ambiguitate deceptum) non sero interpre-
 “ tatum esse, sed vespere †. I agree with St.
 “ Jerom

* Tom. III. fol. 46. K. Edit. Paris 1546.

† Jerom, in these words, evidently supposes that the translator of Matthew's Hebrew Gospel, actually mis-
 took

“ Jerom, that probably the translator is wrong,
 “ but his *sero* does not please me. I am ra-
 “ ther disposed to believe that Matthew wrote,
 “ בִּנְשָׁה, in diluculo, meaning daybreak, or
 “ the dawn of the day; for which the transla-
 “ tor mistook οψε the evening twilight.”

Chap. iii. 15. “ πασαν δικαιοσυνην. Should it not
 “ rather be, παντα δικαιωματα, all precepts rela-
 “ tive to external rites? כל חק.”

P. 861. Chap. iv. 8. “ του κοσμου. This is im-
 “ possible, perhaps the word was הארץ, which
 “ signifies the earth, as well as a country. Οικουμενη
 “ is frequently used for Palestine.”

P. 863. Chap. xxvii. 34. the following cir-
 cumstance deserves attention. “ During the
 “ crucifixion, vinegar mingled with gall, i. e.
 “ with something bitter, was, according to St.
 “ Matthew, brought to Jesus. St. Mark, who
 “ had read St. Matthew, says, mingled with
 “ myrrh, or wine with spice. That there were
 “ both wine and vinegar at the place of exe-
 “ cution, I do not doubt, but the questions are,
 “ what that was which was brought to our

took his author. See below. The Syriac version has
 ברמשא, in Vespere. See Tremellius's Syriac New
 Testament; notes on this verse.

“ Saviour?

“ Saviour? and why, after he had tasted of it,
 “ he would not drink? Here the two Evan-
 “ gelists, though generally consistent in their
 “ accounts, contradict one another; no rea-
 “ son can be given why Christ refused to drink
 “ the vinegar. Wine with spice was given to
 “ malefactors, to intoxicate them, that they
 “ might be less sensible of their sufferings,
 “ The reason why Christ would not taste of
 “ this mixture is evident; but why he should
 “ refuse vinegar, whose thirst-quenching qua-
 “ lity is well known, is not so evident. If he
 “ would not taste of this (mixture) one would
 “ be inclined to think that he designedly in-
 “ creased his sufferings. Why did he taste and
 “ afterwards refuse it, if he wanted any re-
 “ freshment?

“ Hence, it is plain, that something differ-
 “ ent from what he called for, was brought
 “ to him; otherwise he would not have re-
 “ fused it.

“ The question then is, what Hebrew word
 “ stood in the place where we now read vine-
 “ gar? This is easily answered, חֶלֶא, in Chal-
 “ dee is vinegar, and in Hebrew it ought to
 “ be written, חֶלֶה. If the word is differently
 “ pronounced, in statu absoluto, חֶלֶא, or in

“ statu emphatico, חליא, it may signify sweet
 “ wine, for חלא, in Chaldee, Syriac, and Ara-
 “ bic, signifies to be sweet. Supposing then that
 “ St. Matthew wrote במרירא חליא, or חליא
 “ במרירא, vinum myrrhatum, vel, amarum,
 “ Sweet wine mingled with bitter, i. e. with
 “ myrrh; and one single ך (jod) being want-
 “ ing, במרירא חלא, the translator might con-
 “ clude that it was vinegar; and bitter he ren-
 “ dered, as the Septuagint frequently doth, χολη,
 “ gall.

“ Besides, St. Matthew might write, חלא,
 “ without the jod, and mean sweet wine; pro-
 “ nouncing the same letter in statu absoluto,
 “ Chale, it means sweet, and in statu empha-
 “ tico, challe, vinegar *. The translator, who
 “ had Matthew before him, might be mista-
 “ ken; but Mark, who wrote from the mouth
 “ of St. Peter, might be better informed, or
 “ might have known better.”

“ Whoever compares Matthew xxviii. 7.
 “ with Mark xvi. 7. will be apt to suspect that
 “ Mark found something there in the Hebrew

* If St. Matthew wrote חליא, the letter (י) is so
 diminutive in size, that it might easily be overlooked
 by the translator, or the transcriber.

“ Gospel, different from what we now read in
 “ the Greek.”

Page 909. “ The second Hebrew Gospel
 “ was brought from Rome by the Bishop of
 “ Brioux, Jean de Tillet (Tilius). John Mer-
 “ cer had it printed at Paris in 1555. The
 “ title is, (but I translate only the Latin, be-
 “ cause I have some doubt about a copy of the
 “ Hebrew title, and I have not the book it-
 “ self now before me) Evangelium Hebraicum,
 “ Matthæi recens a judeorum penetralibus,
 “ erutum, cum interpretatione Latina ad vulga-
 “ tam, quoad fieri potuit, accommodata. Cum
 “ privilegio. Parisiis. ap. Mart. Juvenem.
 “ M. D. L. V.”

“ It seems, indeed, in all essential parts, to
 “ be the same with the first Hebrew copy,
 “ though one manuscript visibly differs from the
 “ other. For instance, the edition of Tilius
 “ spells the name of Jesus commonly, ישו,
 “ but that of Munster, ישוע: It must, how-
 “ ever, be owned that the striking differences
 “ between these editions may be accounted for.
 “ Munster translated the deficiencies, or La-
 “ cunæ, of his manuscript himself; while, on
 “ the contrary, they were printed in the edi-
 “ tion of Tilius as they stood in the manu-
 “ script.

“ script. The edition of Tilius is not only
 “ scarcer, but also more useful and important,
 “ than that of Munster.”

See Le Long. *Bibliothec. Sacr.* Vol. I.
 p. 190. Antwerp, 1709.

These extracts, as well as the ancient tradition, tend to confirm the internal evidence for an original Syro-chaldaic Gospel, by St. Matthew; and the difference between him and the Evangelist Mark, in their citations out of the Old Testament, taken notice of by Jerom, certainly indicates that our present Greek copy of St. Matthew, is not an original, but a translation.

The other observations and conjectures of the learned Professor, are very ingenious and natural, and deserve particular attention.

As to the Hebrew Gospels by Munster and Tilius, they are of little, or of no importance, as to the question before us, and little need be said about them, because they are generally believed to be only translations from the Greek, and therefore of no more authority than modern versions.

The reader is left to his own reflections and judgment upon these extracts. To me they appear to be of considerable importance in this
 debate

debate *. But the subject must be more minutely discussed, and the objections raised against an original Syro-chaldaic Gospel by St. Matthew, must be particularly examined.

There is not a fact in which all the writers of antiquity are more unanimous in their evidence, than that St. Matthew published his Gospel in Hebrew, or to speak more properly, in Syro-chaldaic, the language then commonly used, and best understood in Palestine or Judea. Many ancients and moderns, as hereafter will be seen, have asserted this fact; and indeed, to reject their united testimonies, seems rather unfavourable to the credit of history.

But we are told that there are several points in which we are obliged to differ from the Fathers. This is freely granted, for they have advanced many strange, absurd, and childish stories †.

* Enquiry, p. 51.

† “ Ego quidem in ea sum sententia, veterum narrationes, quæ nihil habent vel aperte absurdum, vel aliis rebus minime dubiis adversum, si minus firmiter credendas, nec tamen explodendas, aut generalioribus argumentis infirmandas esse, atque hæc mihi lex cum æquitati, tum rectæ rationi et prudentiæ consentanea videtur.” Mosheim, Instit. Major. p. 444.

Thus

Thus Justin Martyr *, as it would seem, on the authority of Aristeas, Philo, or Josephus, says that the Septuagint version of the Old Testament, was made by seventy different men, in as many different cells; and that though they had no communication with one another, their versions perfectly agreed. This is also said by several others, and seems to have been believed till about the beginning of the fifth century.

But after that period, the story began to be doubted, and by many, openly rejected. Thus Jerom says, “et nescio quis primus auctor septuaginta cellulas Alexandriae mendacio suo extruxerit quibus divisi, eadem scriptitarint†.”

The primitive fathers readily believed a story which represented the Septuagint translation as made by inspiration. Few of them understood the original language of the Old Testament; for that reason they were ever inclined to esta-

* Justin Martyr, Sermo ad Gentes. p. 17. Basil, 1555. Edit. Lutet. p. 16, 17. 1551. Edit. Colon. ad Græcos Cohortatio, p. 13, 14. 1686. The same story is also related by Irenæus, lib. iii. ch. 25. Clemens Alexandrinus, Strom. lib. i. Hilary, in Psalm. ii. Augustin. De Civit. Dei, lib. xviii. cap. 53. Cyril of Jerusalem Catechism, 4. p. 37. Philaster Hæres, 90. See Prideaux Connect. vol. iii. p. 38. Edit. 10.

† Jerom, Tom. iii. fol. 5. A. Paris 1546.

blish the authority of that version of it, which they did understand. But the critical reasons for that opinion appeared very insufficient to Jerom, so that he even laughed at Justin Martyr for giving any credit to it; especially for affirming that he himself had seen the cells. These and several other stories we must reject, because they are absurd; but this is not the case with the tradition that St. Matthew wrote his Gospel in Syro-chaldaic.

It is most certain that ignorance and darkness overspread the whole Christian world for many ages, and for that reason the evidence of writers during that long period, must not be altogether depended upon. I lay no stress upon them in my argument. The rule of Baronius has been strictly observed in this Dissertation. "No testimonies of later authors, says he, are to be regarded concerning things of remote antiquity, which are not supported by the testimony of ancient writers *." By this rule, and it is certainly a good one, the notion of a Greek original Gospel by St. Matthew

* "Quod enim a recentiore auctore de rebus adeo antiquis, sine alicujus vetustioris autoritate profertur, contemnitur." Baron. Annal. Eccles. A. D. I. No. 12. p. 49. tom. i. Antwerp 1670.

falls to the ground; for *remote antiquity* is all in favour of a Syro-chaldaic original. This was believed and affirmed by Irenæus, Origen, Jerom, &c. and by Tatian in the compilation of his Harmony; whose abilities, learning and knowledge, of ecclesiastical affairs, will not be called in question. See Enquiry, page, 60, &c.

It is granted by Mr. Jones, that there was a Syro-chaldaic Gospel by St. Matthew, extant in very early times, and that the Nazarenes and Ebionites, believed and declared it to be the original of St. Matthew; and farther, that this opinion was believed by many, if not by most*.

This

* Vindication of the former part of St. Matthew's Gospel from Mr. Whiston's Charge, &c. ch. 17. page 186, London 1719. Mr. Jones, however, understands Eusebius as meaning *most of the Nazarenes and Ebionites* believed and declared it, and this was also the opinion of Valesius. These are the words of Eusebius, Eccles. Hist. lib. iii. cap. 25. ἤδη ἐν τούτοις τινες καὶ τὸ καθ' Ἑβραίων εὐαγγέλιον κατελιξάν· ὡς μάλιστα Ἑβραίων· οἱ τὸν Χριστὸν παραδεξάμενοι χαίρουσι. "Now among these, some have placed the Gospel according to the Hebrews, in which they of the Jews, who believe in Christ, rejoice." The words of Jerom are, In Evangelio quod nuper in Græcum de Hebræo sermone transfulimus, et quod vocatur a plerisque, Matthæi authenticum." Comment. ad Matth.

L. 2,

This is allowing full as much as my argument requires ; for if the Nazarenes and Ebionites, in the earliest age, of whom St. James seems to speak so honourably, Acts xxi. 28, &c. believed it, their evidence must be nearly, if not altogether conclusive. Nor was this sentiment peculiar to the earliest ages, for Jerom expressly tells us, that so late as his time, about the beginning

L. ii. ch. 12. " In the Gospel which the Nazarenes " and Ebionites use, which I lately translated out of the " Hebrew into Greek, and which by most is called the " authentic (Gospel) of Matthew." Jerom uses the same language in one or two other places.

Eusebius, in the above passage, is speaking of doubtful books received by some persons into the sacred canon, which were rejected by others, and where this Hebrew Gospel seems to be placed as of equal authority, at least, with the Revelation. However, it is by no means clear, nor, indeed, probable, that either he or Jerom meant the Nazarenes and Ebionites, exclusively of those who were thought Catholic Christians. The language of these two ancient Christian writers, compared with several others, during the first centuries, implies that not only Jewish believers were united in their sentiments on this head, but also that heathen converts were of the same opinion. Indeed, it is not at all probable that Eusebius, or Jerom, would have used such indeterminate language, had they meant only the Jewish Christians ; for in their day, the Nazarenes and Ebionites were looked upon as heretics.

of

of the fifth century, it was believed by most to be the true and authentic Gospel by St. Matthew.

The chief objection to this fact is grounded upon the notion, that Papias is the only original witness to it, and that the fathers have asserted it upon his authority.

This is giving great weight, indeed, to the testimony of Papias ; certainly much more than he deserved, if he was, as Eusebius says, “ a weak man.” But there is no sufficient reason to believe that this was the case, though it hath been so often asserted by modern writers. Irenæus seems to have been as much an original witness to this fact as Papias.

To settle this point, we must carefully and minutely examine into the time when these two fathers flourished.

Papias was the disciple and companion of Polycarp *, supposed to have been ordained Bishop of Smyrna by the apostles. Irenæus was also a disciple of Polycarp, as he expressly says in an epistle to Florinus mentioned by Eusebius †.

* *Ἰωάννου μὲν ἀκουστῆς Πολυκαρπῶν δὲ ἑταῖρος γεγονώς.* Irenæus, lib. v. c. 33. p. 498. Colon. 1596. See also Eusebius Eccles. Hist. lib. iii. c. 39.

† Euseb. Eccles. Hist. lib. v. cap. 20.

Papias seems to have been alive in the 116th year of Christ, but how long he survived that year, cannot now be determined*.

Irenæus was born, some say, in the year 97; according to others, in 108, or 120, or 140†; and died between the years 190, and 202.

Polycarp was not put to death before the year 148; or, as some eminent writers think, before 167, or 169. If Polycarp died in 169, and Irenæus was born in 97, then the latter was 72 years of age, when the former died. If Polycarp died in 148, and Irenæus was born in 108, he was 40; but if Irenæus was not

* Photius intimates, and the Alexandrian Chronicon, expressly affirms, that Papias suffered martyrdom, in the reign of Marcus Antoninus, about the year 177; but this is, by no means, probable, because he is never mentioned after the above year. It is not at all likely, that he should have lived about sixty years, and not be once mentioned by any writer. Cave's Lives of the primitive Fathers. Irenæus.

* Lardner's Cred. Gospel Hist. Vol. II. p. 154. Edit. 1788. Part II. vol. I. 344. art. Irenæus.

The learned Dodwell was of opinion, that Irenæus was born in the reign of Nerva, between the years 96, and 98. "Ego tamen potius sub Nerva natum existimo, quæ certe Sententia Verbis proprius respondet, "atque congruentius." Dissert. in Iræn. p. 229. Oxon. 1689.

born 'till 140, and Polycarp was put to death in 148, he could be no more than 8 years of age when Polycarp received the crown of martyrdom; or, lastly, if Polycarp died in 149, and Irenæus was born in 120, he was 28.

The last dates seem evidently wrong, for if Irenæus was not born 'till 140, he could hardly be, even, acquainted with Papias, who, we may conclude from the silence of all the fathers about him, after the year 116, was dead before the year 140.

As this date is wrong, let us suppose that Irenæus was born in 108*; then in the year 148, he would be 40 years of age, at the earliest period of Polycarp's martyrdom. These years, in my opinion, are to be preferred, because they best agree with the words of Irenæus,

* Pothinus, Bishop of Lyons, died in 177. Irenæus succeeded him in 179; and died, at latest, in 202. If he was born in 108, he was chosen bishop when about 70 years of age. If born in 120, he was 59; but if in 140, he was only 39. If, according to some writers, Polycarp, accompanied by Irenæus, went to Rome, about the year 157, the latest date of his martyrdom, viz. either in 167, or 169, must be the true one. At that time, it is thought that Irenæus went to Lyons, and became Presbyter to Pothinus, about 20 years before he succeeded him as the bishop of that see.

in

in his Epistle to Florinus, recorded by Eusebius *. At 8 years of age, he could not be the disciple of Polycarp, nor, most probably, had ever seen Papias; but he might have been the disciple of the one, and acquainted with the other, if he was born in the year 108 †. Dodwell's date of Irenæus's birth seems too early; for if he did not suffer till the year 190, or 202, of Christ, he must have been about a 100 when he died; a greater age than we have any reason to think he attained to. If we place his birth in 120, that is, four years after the last account we have of Papias, supposing Papias to have lived ten or twelve years longer; Irenæus could hardly have known him, and would not then be old enough to be the disciple of Polycarp. It is highly improbable that children were instructed by him in the Christian Doctrine.

Hence it appears evident that Irenæus lived early enough to learn every thing which he hath advanced upon every subject from Poly-

* Εἶδον γὰρ σε, παῖς ὢν ἐτι, ἐν τῇ κατῷ Ἀσίᾳ παρὰ Πολυκαρπῷ.
Euseb. Eccles. Hist. Lib. V.

† The birth of Irenæus in any year, excepting the years 120, or 140, which seem irreconcilable with his own words, above cited, equally suits my argument.

carp himself *, and from other ancient Christians, of whom he often speaks in his writings.

The reason why Irenæus had no particular and personal intimacy with Polycarp in more advanced life, was, that he removed to Lyons in Gaul, (France), a great distance from Smyrna; where he was, as above observed, for several years Presbyter or assistant to Pothinus, the Bishop of that city, and whom he afterwards succeeded. It was not, therefore, likely that Polycarp and Irenæus could have a personal intimacy for many years.—This circumstance fully accounts for the words of Irenæus, when he says that he knew Polycarp, Papias, and Florinus, in his early age; but Papias living in Asia Minor, at no great distance from Smyrna, might frequently attend upon Polycarp.

I have dwelt the longer upon these particulars, in order to shew that these two fathers,

* Irenæus seems to have been at Smyrna with Polycarp for some time; and might often have gone to Ephesus, about 40 miles south of Smyrna, before he went to Lyons, and satisfy himself on this, and on any other particulars; for in his days there were several alive, as we may reasonably think, who had conversed with the Apostle John; at least, with those who had conversed with apostolical men. See Eusebius, *ubi supra*.

Papias

Papias and Irenæus, were, for some time, contemporaries; both acquainted with Polycarp; and consequently, that the latter might as well have known the sentiments of Polycarp on every subject as the former.

In this reasonable view of the matter, it is clear that we are not obliged to believe that Irenæus bore his testimony to an original Syro-chaldaic Gospel by St. Matthew, on the authority of Papias. He himself intimates nothing like it. He speaks of it as an acknowledged, well attested fact; and not as the report of any single individual. The Writings of Papias, it may be true, were published before those of Irenæus, but that is no proof that he asserted this fact upon the authority of Papias alone*.

But let us examine his own words,

Ο μὲν δὲ ματθαῖος ἐν τοῖς ἑβραίοις τῇ ἰδίᾳ διαλέκτῳ αὐτῶν, καὶ

* It is generally thought that Irenæus published his treatise against Heretics about the year 176 or 177, or later. Lardner. Cred. ubi Supra. Art. Irenæus. Edit. 1788. Vol. II. p. 156-7. Dr. Lardner was of opinion that Irenæus's 5 books were not published all together, but at some distance of time from each other. Ubi supra.

* γραφην εξηνεγκεν ευαγγελιου †, του Πητρου και του Παυλου εν
Ρωμη ευαγγελιζομενων και θεμελιουντων την εκκλησιαν ‡.

“ Matthew, then among the Hebrews,
“ wrote a Gospel in their own dialect, while
“ Peter and Paul were preaching the Gospel at
“ Rome, and founding the Church.”

This language seems utterly to overthrow the notion that Irenæus believed and asserted that St. Matthew wrote his Gospel in Syro-chaldaic, on the authority of Papias. One mentions a particular circumstance, about which the other is totally silent. Irenæus absolutely fixes the time when St. Matthew published his Gospel; but Papias, according to Eusebius, says nothing about it. This very strongly implies, that the report of an original Syro-chaldaic Gospel by

† Γραφην εξηνεγκεν ευαγγελιου, may be properly rendered, “ wrote a Gospel.” εκφερεν εις φως, “ edere Librum.” See Constantine’s Lexicon. Emitto in Latin is used in the same sense. If we understand the phrase as meaning, “ he brought a gospel with him,” it makes no difference; for if he brought a Hebrew Gospel with him, we may naturally, indeed, almost certainly conclude, that he brought that Gospel with him, which he himself had written; for it never was said that either of the other Evangelists wrote a Gospel in Syro-chaldaic.

‡ Irenæus, Adv. Hæres. Lib. III. Cap. I. Colon. 1596. Euseb. Eccles. Hist. Lib. V. Cap. 8.

St.

St. Matthew was then generally believed, and was not derived from the authority or testimony of any one single person*.

But there are several objections to a Syro-chaldaic Gospel by St. Matthew, urged by Dr. Whitby, Mr. Jones, Dr. Lardner†, and others; the most material of which shall now be particularly considered.

First, it is said, "that our present Greek copy has no mark of a translation."

This objection hath never been properly defined, though commonly urged. What are we to understand by "marks of a translation?"

* If St. Peter and St. Paul ever were at Rome together, it must have been in the third of Nero, and the 59th of Christ. Euseb. Chron. This date of St. Matthew's Gospel, is much doubted. Dr. Lardner places it later, Edit. 1788. Vol. VI. p. 52, &c. and he has much reason on his side; especially as it is by no means certain that they ever were at Rome together. But whether Irenæus was right in this point or not, as to the time, my argument is no way affected. All that I contend for is, that Irenæus, in this assertion, did not depend upon the single authority of Papias, which, surely, this circumstance most strongly implies.

† Dr. Whitby's general preface to his Paraphrase. Lardner's Cred. 2d Part, Vol. I. Art. Papias; and Supplement, Vol. I. Art. Matthew. Edit. 1788, Vol. II. p. 110, and Vol. VI. p. 62. and Mr. Jones, ubi supra.

If the interpretation or explanation of Syriac words be thought a proof that St. Matthew wrote in Greek, it may be truly answered, that, in reason, this hath not the appearance of an objection; because it was what every judicious translator would naturally do. The names of persons, places, &c. he certainly did right in translating, otherwise persons unacquainted with the Syro-chaldaic language, could not understand the meaning of Golgotha, Barjona, Eli, Eli, Lama Sabachthani, &c. The translator, whoever he was, acted very properly in adding such explanations.

It were to be wished, perhaps, that he had done it in one place more, Matt. v. 22. where he translated a Syriac word, מורה "a rebel," or "Apostate," by *Μωρε* (the vocative case of *Μωρος* "a Fool,") which is contrary to the construction of the passage. It is true, that wicked men are in Scripture, called "Fools," but that sense will not suit this passage. Here is plainly a climax. The first crime is "to be angry with our brother, without a cause;" the next is, to call him "Raca," a "worthless fellow;" the third degree of wickedness, surely, must imply something more aggravating than the other two: more than the Greek word *Μωρε*, properly signifies. Now as
Raca

Raca is Syriac *, it may naturally incline one to believe that the other word is Syriac, מורה "a rebel" or "Apostate." This sense of the word makes the gradation natural and proper; but the Greek sense makes it exactly the reverse †. This passage, of itself, will dispose one to think that our present Greek copy, is not an original, but a translation.

But we may go farther and say, that we have an almost certain mark of a translation; nearly, a direct proof that our present Greek copy, is a translation, because the translator seems actually to have mistaken the sense of his author. Compare Matthew x, 10, with Mark vi, 8, and 9. In Matthew, the Disciples are

* "Rhacca," in South Wales, is now used in the same sense with the English word "Rake." "Rhacca" "brwnt yw efe;" "He is a dirty, or worthless fellow." The origin of this British word seems to be Syriac. As the ancient British hath so great an affinity with the Hebrew and Syriac, this word, among others, may be one instance of an English word derived from the Welsh. Raca, Syriac, is derived from the Hebrew ריק "vacuus," "inanis," &c. See Buxtorff's, Jun. Lexicon Syriacum; and Beza in Loc.

† See Dr. Sykes's Principles and Connexion of Natural and Revealed Religion, Chapter 14, p. 425. London, 1740.

com-

commanded to take, *μηδε υποδηματα, μηδε ραβδον*,
 “neither shoes, nor a staff* ;” in Mark, we
 read, *μη ραβδον μονον—αλλ υποδεδμενους σανδαλια*,
 “save a staff only—but be shod with sandals.”
 As St. Mark is generally thought to be an
 abridger of St. Matthew †, at least, in

* In our present Greek copies of St. Matthew, we
 read *μηδε ραβδον*, “without a staff,” though in English
 we read “without staves.” This variation from the
 original, probably, was to reconcile the two Evangelists.
 However, it seems probable that the Theophylact, about
 the end of the 11th century read, *μηδε ραβδους*; and it is so
 read in several manuscripts. See Dr. Mill.

† Notwithstanding the additions to St. Matthew, to
 be found in St. Mark’s Gospel, the method and manner
 seem plainly to shew, that the latter had St. Matthew’s
 Gospel before him.—“Besides the united testimony of
 “the fathers, it is unaccountable, if St. Matthew wrote
 “in Greek, why St. Mark should abridge him. The
 “size of St. Matthew’s Gospel could not be his motive.
 “But if he wrote in Hebrew, then a Greek abstract or
 “abridgement of him might be of use.” Michaelis’s
 Introd. Lect. to the sacred books of the New Testa-
 ment. Sect. 89. p. 220. London, 1761. See also page
 229.—That St. Mark abridged St. Matthew’s Gospel,
 is said by Augustin, “*Marcus eum (Matthæum) sub-*
secutus tamquam Pedissequus, et breviator ejus, vide-
tur.” De Cons. Evangelistarum. Lardner, Vol. V.
 p. 92-3, and note S. But the Doctor was of another
 opinion, *ibid.* p. 95-6. See Enquiry, pages 113, and
 171, note. See also Michaelis, *ubi supra*.

part,

part, the translator might, possibly, mistake one word for another. He might read אִל Hebrew, *μὴδε*, Greek “neither,” for אִלֵּא Syriac, *μη*, or, *χωρις μονον*, “except,” or “except only.” The Disciples were to take nothing with them but staves, and sandals, and it would have been strange, indeed, if they had been sent without them †. But of this, and of some other points relative to this subject, I refer the reader to Professor Michaelis’s *Introductory Lectures*, Sect. 88, 89, 90, and 93. See Calvin and Dr. Macknight.

But if by “no marks of a translation,” we are to understand the equality of the stile, I

† I apprehend that Matth. v, 18. affords an argument for a Syro-chaldaic Gospel, *‘εως αν παρελθη ο ουρανός και η γη, ιωτα εν η μια κεραια ου μη παρελθη απο του νομου εως αν παντα γενηται.* “Till Heaven and Earth pass, one jot, or one tittle, shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.” The learned are generally agreed that the modern Hebrew type, is the ancient Chaldee; in which the *ιωτα* (י) in Syriac (ܝ) is the most diminutive letter in that alphabet. *Κεραια*, signifies a dot over a letter, to point out the accent.—As the writer seems to allude to the most diminutive letter in that alphabet, and to a dot, it is most natural to suppose, that it was the language in which our Saviour spoke, and the Evangelist wrote; that is, in the Syro-chaldaic language.

observe,

observe, in answer, that a person well acquainted with any two languages, may, surely, translate a performance out of the one into the other, in an even, elegant style. Some translations, not only equal, but superior in elegance to the originals are to be met with, in various languages.—But till the precise meaning of “marks of a translation,” are clearly defined, no direct answer can be given to this objection.

It is also objected to a Syro-chaldaic Gospel by St. Matthew, that Papias said, “every one interpreted it as he was able *.”

This, surely, is a very strange objection; and, in my opinion, very strongly concludes against the notion it is intended to support.

Pere Simon hath very justly remarked “that
“ if there had been, in Papias’s time, a Greek
“ Version of St. Matthew, he would not have
“ failed to have told us of it; on the contrary,
“ he declares that every one translated it as he
“ was able †.” In truth, the meaning of Papias

* Jones’s Vindication of the former part of St. Matthew’s Gospel, Ch. xviii, p. 195.

† Crit. Hist. of the Text of the New Testament, 1st Part, Ch. ix, p. 79. London, 1689.

See Dr. Lardner’s Cred. part II, vol. I. p. 248. Edit. 1788. Vol. II, p. 109—110.

seems

seems to have been this, and no more; that till there was a Greek translation of St. Matthew's Gospel, every one interpreted the Syro-chaldaic copy as well as he could.

He speaks of the time when St. Matthew first published his Gospel, before it appeared in any other language. These words of Papias, therefore, only prove that there was a Syro-chaldaic Gospel by St. Matthew, in the earliest times, and that, in his day, it was received as the composition of that Apostle.

But let us particularly attend to Mr. Jones, who lays a very considerable stress upon this objection. " But notwithstanding this assertion
 " of Papias, says he, there seems to be very
 " good reason to believe the contrary; for all
 " the writers of that age, cotemporaries with
 " Papias, and some of them older than he,
 " when they cite this Gospel, do cite it as it is
 " in our present Greek copies. Clemens Ro-
 " manus, Ignatius, Barnabas, Polycarp, (an
 " acquaintance of Papias's,) Irenæus (an ac-
 " quaintance of Polycarp's) and Justin Martyr,
 " do cite this Gospel in such a manner, as unde-
 " niably evinces, not only that they made use
 " of the same copies, but also the same with
 " our present Greek ones. Now, adds he,
 this

“ this could not possibly have been, if according
 “ to Papias, every one translated as they were
 “ able, and there was no common Version †.”

All this reasoning is founded upon the supposition that the words of Papias imply that there was no Greek version in his day. But as hath already been observed, his words imply no such thing : there might, or there might not, be such a Version, when he wrote. He only intended to say that when this Gospel was *first* published, every one translated it as well as he could.

Let us, however, for argument's sake, suppose that there was no common Greek version of St. Matthew in the days of Papias ; is it any way difficult to account for this similarity of ex-

* Mr. Jones says, that he strictly examined this matter, however he hath asserted what he could not prove. Upon a cursory review of Cotelerius's *Patres Apostolici*, I found many differences among the apostolical fathers, from our present copies. The sense, generally, is exactly the same, but the language, in some places, is different. Hence, I conclude, that the fathers who did not understand Syro-chaldaic, made use of the language of others who did ; and that, in their day, there was not an authentic Greek copy of St. Matthew's Gospel received by the Church.

Jones, *ubi supra*. Ch. 18. p. 195—6.
 preffion

pression in all the writers who have cited this gospel in Greek? Might it not, naturally, arise from the preaching, and, perhaps, from the private letters of Barnabas and Ignatius, &c. who are allowed to have understood the Syro-chaldaic dialect?

It may be, and I believe it is true, that few of those ancient fathers, who have mentioned this gospel, understood the Syro-chaldaic tongue. But this circumstance, if I am not greatly mistaken, makes against Mr. Jones's hypothesis. If they all understood it, their quotations (supposing there was no common Greek Version) might have been very different. They might not only have differed from one another, but from themselves, at different times *. But if they did not understand Syro-chaldee, and yet did not vary in their citations, it is most natural to think that they only made use of the language of those fathers who did understand it. Notwithstanding Mr. Jones's "Strict Examination," it is probable, at least, that Ignatius has quoted this Syro-chaldaic

* It is well known that the Fathers very often quoted the Scriptures from memory.

Gospel*, and most likely, also, Justin Martyr†. But above all, let it be observed, that the reason why the fathers, who understood Syro-chaldaic, always cite this gospel in Greek was, that they were writing to persons and churches out of Judea, who knew very little, if any thing of the Syro-chaldaic language; they cited it, therefore, when writing to persons, or churches, in a language which they understood ‡.

We are told farther, “ That the Greek was
 “ the most proper language, because it was the
 “ most universal, and that St. Matthew must
 “ have been acquainted with it, as he had been
 “ a publican, before he became an Apostle ||”.

* Ignatius Epist. et Smyrnæos, p. 3. Amstel. 1646. St. Jerom says that Ignatius quoted this Gospel, Catalog. N° 26.

† Justin Martyr. Dial. cum Trypho. part 2, p. 331.—Edit. Thirlby, 1722. Edit. Colon. 1686. p. 315. See the Dissertation.

‡ Mr. Jones says, that Origen and Jerom often compared the Nazarene and Greek copies together, and cite the former often in their works. They, no doubt, had sufficient reasons for it, and believed that St. Matthew wrote in Hebrew, but, says our sagacious critic, “ This was an error,”—However, I believe, that Origen and Jerom were better judges in this matter, than Mr. Jones could pretend to be. Jones, *ubi supra*, p. 193.—See Enquiry, p. 71, note.

|| Jones, *ubi supra*, p. 199.

As

As a proof that Greek was the most proper language, it is added, that St. James, while he dwelt at Jerusalem, wrote an epistle, about the same time, i. e. about the year 60 of Christ, "to the twelve tribes scattered abroad," in Greek.

The conduct of St. James, in this case, was highly proper, and indeed, very necessary; because the persons to whom he wrote, were scattered abroad; and the Septuagint version of the Old Testament was chiefly used by them in their synagogues. An epistle, therefore, in that language would be best understood by them; for many of them, it is most probable, had left their native country a great number of years, and many of them were born abroad. But St. Matthew's writing a Gospel in Greek doth, by no means, appear either so proper or useful.

He was writing to Jews in their own country, on the eve of a severe persecution, in the reign of Nero, before the year of Christ 66, when the Jewish war began, which continued till the year 70, when Jerusalem was taken and destroyed by Titus Vespasian. Is it not, then, highly reasonable to think, that in such circumstances, he would write in the common
d dialect

dialect of the country? Had the Greek been as well understood in Judea, at that period, as the Syro-chaldaic, how came it to pass, that our Saviour did not preach in Greek? The very same reasons, therefore, which induced Jesus to converse with, and instruct the multitude which usually attended upon his public ministry, in Syro-chaldaic, would also induce an apostle, at so perilous a time, to publish a Gospel in the same language; that is, to instruct and establish the poor and ignorant among the Jews in the belief of the truth of Christianity.

For these reasons, it seems evident to me, that the Greek was *not* the most proper language. I enter not into the question, whether St. Matthew understood Greek, because he, like the other apostles, when necessary, without doubt, was indued with the gift of tongues.

4. Again, it is said, that “if our present Greek copy of St. Matthew’s Gospel be only a translation, it must be of very doubtful and precarious authority.”

To this objection it may be answered, that several Greek Fathers are now to be met with only in ancient translations: however, very few,
if

if any, question their authenticity or integrity, on that account *. Farther, this objection derives all its weight from the notion of verbal inspiration, which has no foundation in either truth or reason †. It must indeed be given up, before we can with due advantage defend revelation against our adversaries. If we can be satisfied that we have a genuine copy of St. Matthew's Gospel, it is a matter of very little,

* The five books of Irenæus, against heresies, which were written by him in Greek, are now extant only in an ancient Latin version; excepting the first book, and some fragments preserved by Eusebius, and by other Greek writers who have quoted him. These are all the writings of Irenæus remaining. Dr. Middleton was mistaken when he said that Irenæus's works were all now to be found in Greek.

Vindication of the Free Enquiry into the miraculous powers, p. 94.—1751.

See Lardner's Cred. part 2. vol. i. Art. Irenæus, Edit. 1788. Vol. ii. p. 156—7.

† This will evidently appear to every one who consults Dr. Henry Owen's "Observations on the four Gospels." 1764. Jerom hath observed that "the Evangelists were not solicitous about syllables and points of words, so that the meaning of the sentence were translated: nor did St. Paul render a text, word for word, quod facere omnino contemnit." Dr. Wall's preface to Critical Notes upon the New Testament. P. 23.

if of any importance, in what language it was first written. Through divine Goodness, it is evident that we have such a copy. There are several circumstances which prove it. The perfect consistency between this and the other Gospels, in every matter of real importance, and with the citations made out of it by all the Fathers, from the beginning, are sufficient to convince us that our present Greek copy, though not the very work of the apostle, is a faithful and correct translation of the original. These circumstances afford sufficient grounds to believe, that the translator of this Gospel, whoever he was, performed his work with strict fidelity and honesty.

5. Once more, we are told that it is very "strange and surprising, that this Syro-chaldaic Gospel, should be so soon lost, if it had been the work of an apostle."

Is it not of some advantage to us that the original is lost? A well attested translation is, at least, preferable to the original without a translation; because we can more easily and expeditiously attain to the knowledge of one, than of two dead languages. Had St. Matthew's Gospel been now to be found only in Syro-

Syro-chaldee, we must have learnt that language to understand this single Gospel. As human life is so short, and so very uncertain; and as so much depends upon the right improvement of it, as little time as possible should be employed in learning sounds.

But to give a direct and full answer to this objection, let it be considered that the design with which St. Matthew published a Syro-chaldaic Gospel, was, within a short time answered; and consequently, the peculiar usefulness of that copy, ceased; for Providence hath taken care, that wherever the Jews have now a residence, they may easily procure the whole New Testament in languages which they all understand. When the Jews, about the year of Christ, 135, were driven out of Jerusalem by the Roman Emperor Adrian, a free communication between the jewish and gentile Christians was nearly, if not altogether, broken off*. Very few, on either side, understood each other's language, which circumstance, by the way, naturally accounts for the many early

* About this period I am disposed to believe that the Nazarenes and Ebionites, as sects of Christians, were first distinguished. See Enquiry, p. 32.

corruptions, childish and absurd stories, now found in the remaining fragments of the Nazarene Gospel: whereas the Greek tongue being much more generally known, a gospel in that language would not be so easily corrupted.

When these things are properly attended to, it cannot be a matter of surprize that all the correct copies of the Syro-chaldaic Gospel should soon be lost. This indeed, could not well fail of being the consequence, for the number of the first jewish converts was daily decreasing. Some of them died; others, during the persecution, left Judea, and joined themselves to other christian societies. When they became acquainted with the Greek version of St Matthew's Gospel, it is most likely, and most natural to suppose, that they took little notice of the original, which was unintelligible to the brethren among whom they dwelt. The Syro-chaldaic copy being thus neglected, would of course, be soon lost*.

These

* Besides, books were then very scarce and expensive, being all transcribed with the pen. See Hallett's Introduction to a paraphrase and notes on the three last chapters of the Epistle to the Hebrews, p. 38. The learned author referred to in the preface, after he had read this Dissertation in manuscript, thus wrote, "Much
" less

These are the chief objections, that I have met with, to a Syro-chaldaic Gospel by St. Matthew; and their insufficiency and weakness are tacitly acknowledged by Dr. Whitby, a staunch advocate for a Greek original. He closes his prefatory discourse to his paraphrase and commentary with these words; “Notwithstanding, if any man like not this opinion, he may compound the matter with the fathers thus: That St. Matthew might deliver the Gospel which he writ as well in Hebrew to the Jews, who understood that language only, as in Greek to the Hellenistick Jews, and to the gentile converts; and since it is agreed on all hands, that he left Judea to preach to the Gentiles, what is more reasonable than to conceive, he left that Gospel he had preached to them, and writ by the assistance of the spirit, as a rule of faith to all nations, in a language which those nations understood *.”

“less evidence than has been produced, would have been sufficient for my conviction,” (that St. Matthew wrote his Gospel in the Syro-chaldaic,) “upon the principles of common sense.”

* Whitby, ubi supra, p. 48.

It

It is evident from this passage, that the learned doctor saw that his reasonings on the subject were not conclusive. Let us hear the honest and truly learned Mr. Whiston. "A double
 " publication of the same book, is a thing *never*
 " heard of, as to any book of either the
 " Old Testament, or the New, in *all* anti-
 " quity *."

The evidences for an original Syro-chaldaic Gospel by St. Matthew, have been laid before the reader. He is left to judge whether the objections and arguments urged against this opinion, since the days of Erasmus, are sufficient to overthrow the united testimonies of the ancients for about 1500 years †. It is worthy of remark, that the ancients *only* ascribe to St. Matthew, a Syro-chaldaic Gospel. Concerning the original language of the other three Evangelists, there never was, that I know of, any debate or doubt.

* Mr. Whiston's Six Dissertations, p. 325. 1734.
 See Enquiry, p. 54.

† Erasmus seems to have been the first who hinted a doubt concerning the original language of St. Matthew's gospel. He was born about 1467, and died about 1536, of Christ.

It may, perhaps, be asked, “ To what purpose all this labour to prove that St. Matthew wrote his Gospel in the Syro-chaldaic ? What advantage, what benefit to Christianity, can be derived from that circumstance, supposing it to be demonstrated ? ” To these questions it may be replied, truth, the truth of history, is particularly concerned in the discussion of this point. However, let me ask, in return, what advantage, what benefit can be derived from the notion that St. Matthew wrote, and published his Gospel in Greek ? Why are so many learned men, of late especially, so anxious to weaken, indeed, too effectually, to destroy the testimony of all antiquity, on a point which really is altogether immaterial ? For the objection that our present copy is of very precarious authority, if not an original, hath, I presume, been shewn to be of no importance. In this debate, I have this advantage : all the Fathers, for many centuries, and many of them, men of genius and learning, are on my side. There is not a single dissentient voice, that I can find, before the time of Erasmus. It hath been already acknowledged, that the grossest ignorance and superstition overspread the whole Christian world for
many

many years ; but as the primitive times were blessed with the piety, the learning, and great natural abilities of an Irenæus, an Origen, an Eusebius, a Jerom, &c. who have expressly asserted this fact ; and of others who plainly intimate it ; their united testimonies will justify us in believing it. We admit their evidence in matters of infinitely greater importance, than the original language of a gospel : for upon their testimony we believe the truth of revelation ; that there was such a person as Jesus, or that there were such men, as Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John ; and that the four gospels were written by them. If we indulge to hypothesis, and uncertain, perhaps, ill-founded conjectures, in opposition to their united evidence, for about 400 years immediately after the publication of this gospel, when learning flourished, we shall, in no small degree, weaken the credit of history, and raise doubts concerning facts of modern date.

But the chief reason why I contend for an original Syro-chaldaic Gospel by St. Matthew is, that unbelievers object to the contents of the first and second chapters of that gospel in our present

present Greek copies; and it must be owned, that they are the most difficult and discordant parts in all the New Testament*.

Now, as it appears highly probable, if not certain, that the Syro-chaldaic Gospel, used, undoubtedly by the Ebionites, and, probably, by the Nazarenes, did not contain these two chapters; not to insist upon their authenticity will throw the labouring oar into the hands of our adversaries. They must prove their authenticity, which they will find not a little difficult, before we can justly be called upon to vindicate their contents. As it hath been observed by many writers, that the strongest objections, and those which are most frequently urged by unbelievers are drawn from the contents of these two chapters; and as there are some reasons to suspect their authenticity from external, and internal evidence; would it not be best to place them among the controverted books mentioned by Dr. Lardner? They should not be alledged as *alone* affording a proof of the truth of any doctrine or fact†. Some of the

* See Enquiry, p. 122, and Dr. Wall's Critical Notes on the beginning of St. Matthew, and the preface, p. 48.

† Enquiry, p. 15, and Lardner's Supplement, vol. i. p. 29, &c. Edit. 1788. Vol. vi. p. 16, &c.

best scholars and divines, have acknowledged that they cannot remove all the difficulties to be met with in these two chapters, nor, satisfactory *to themselves* answer all objections:

The author of this publication hath only to add, that he is a Christian upon principle; that he believes in a divine revelation; and that his sole design in writing, is to clear the sacred volume from inconsistencies and difficulties.

If he has been so weak as to advance contradictions and absurdities, he will be the more easily refuted and exposed. Though he may be considered as unworthy of notice, the subject is of importance, and deserving of very particular attention. Short declamatory pamphlets can answer no good purpose. It is his sincere wish to see a rational defence of these chapters by any person who is really acquainted with the Fathers, especially those of the first centuries, till the days of Jerom. He assures the public that he will readily give up the contest, when a candid, judicious, and unequivocal vindication of these chapters is given by any one who is really qualified for the undertaking.

A real

A real friend to Truth, and Christianity, as the author solemnly declares himself to be, will never contend for victory alone in a debate. The author assures the public, that he shall be as much pleased to have his doubts fully removed, as to see them established. He then will have the honour of having called out an able advocate, or advocates, to explain a part of the sacred volume, which hath hitherto been attempted in vain upon any sound and rational principle.

A F R E E

A

FREE ENQUIRY, &c.

SECTION I.

General Observations on the Canon of the New Testament. The New Testament on the whole uncorrupted. Instances nevertheless of Interpolations in both the Old and New Testament.

THAT the books of the New Testament were written by the persons to whom they now are commonly ascribed, has been sufficiently proved by many authors; especially, by the late excellent and learned Dr. Lardner, in his justly celebrated *Credibility of the Gospel History* *: and they who carefully

* See, also, an excellent little treatise, called “*Libellus de sacra Scripturae Auctoritate*,” by Faustus Socinus.

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peruse that valuable work will see that the Gospel of Christ is not a “cunningly devised fable *,” but “the power of God unto salvation, to every one that believeth †.”

When we examine into the Gospel, as a detail of facts, we find that its authenticity is better established, than the authenticity of any facts, which were transacted at a period equally distant from our own. Nay, they who doubt, whether Jesus Christ, and the other persons mentioned in the New Testament, existed at the time they are said to have done, may with equal reason doubt the existence of persons who, we are assured, did live not many years ago.

It is, at least, as credible that Jesus of Nazareth lived in Judea, between seventeen and eighteen hundred years since ; that he propagated a new religion, and was put to a violent death, as that Julius Cæsar lived and performed the actions attributed to him in history. Indeed, the evidence is much more conclusive for the existence of the former, than for that of the latter ; for the monuments of the existence of Christ are more numerous and unquestionable, than those which prove the existence of Julius Cæsar.

* 2 Pet. i. 16.

† Rom. i. 16.

The customs which universally prevail throughout the Christian world at this day, are direct proofs that Jesus sojourned upon earth. This is the case, for instance, with regard to the customs of baptizing in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit; of eating bread and drinking wine in remembrance of Christ; and of praying to God through him, as the Mediator; which practices can easily be traced up to the very time wherein history relates that Jesus lived, and no higher.

Again, when we consider the Gospel as a system of doctrines, the many salutary effects it produced in the world will furnish us with numerous and conclusive arguments in its favour. Wherever its divine light reached, it banished that gross idolatry which for ages had overspread the face of the earth, and was the disgrace of mankind. It actually destroyed all the gods of Greece and Rome. It civilized the nature, and refined the manners of men. Doctrines attended with such salutary consequences, carry in them the strongest marks of a divine original. What all the ancient philosophers, supported by power, wit, and learning, could not accomplish, was speedily effected by Jesus of Nazareth, and a few of his dis-

ciples ; the greater number of whom were poor, illiterate, and unpolished fishermen of Galilee *.

These considerations must incline us to think, without particularly regarding the nature of its doctrines, that there is something divine in Christianity. But when we consult the sacred volume, and observe its clear tendency to bring

* “Plotinus, as Porphyry relates, desired the Emperor Gallienus to rebuild a ruined city in Campania, and to give it to the Philosophers, proposing to dwell there himself with his disciples, and to establish Plato’s republic. But though he was much in the Emperor’s favour, his project met with opposition at court, and came to nothing. *Thus philosophy, though patronized by Princes, could never, in any case, introduce its rules even into one city ; and Jesus Christ hath established his over all the world, in spite of all worldly opposition from the great and the learned.*”—Jortin’s Remarks on Ecclesiastical History, vol. i. p. 376. 2d edition.—Gallienus died about the year 268.

Chrysoſtom, about the year 398, and Theodoret, about the year 423, say, “That Zeno, Plato, and Socrates, endeavoured to introduce a new course of life in vain ; but Jesus Christ, not only taught, but settled a new polity all over the world ; though the Gospel was preached only by fishermen, publicans, and a tent-maker. Lardner, vol. 5. p. 148, and 198, &c.

However, the rapid progress which Christianity made in the world, is not a conclusive, but a presumptive proof of its divine origin ; because success, in any case, is not a proof of its truth. Witness Popery and Mohammedism.

men

men from sin, to holiness, happiness, and eternal life, it is hardly possible for us to question its divinity.

It opens to our view many very amazing scenes of divine love and goodness. It declares to us that "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting Life *." It confirms to us what, indeed, our own daily experience fully proves, that we are sinners, under a sentence of death; and, at the same time, directs us in a way to obtain the remission of our sins, and eternal happiness. To make use of the words of St. Peter, we are assured, by the Gospel, that "according to the abundant mercy of God, we are begotten again, unto a lively hope, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, even to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for us, who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation †."

We have the utmost reason to believe that the books which contain these glad tidings of great joy are come down to us, *upon the whole*, uncorrupted; because there were several cir-

* John iii. 16.

† 1 Pet. i. 3—5.

cumstances, which rendered any *very material* alterations exceedingly difficult, indeed impossible. Numerous copies of these sacred books were quickly spread abroad; they were every where considered as divine treasures; they were studied with care; and they were always read in the public assemblies of Christians. They were soon translated into a variety of languages; there were many passages cited out of them by numerous writers; and, above all, the many differing sects were a constant guard on each other: for, as in their debates they appealed to the same books, it was not easy for either side materially to alter or corrupt them. Accordingly, the same books have, in all ages, been admitted as canonical, and *in every thing of moment*, all copies, versions and citations even now agree*.

The person, therefore, who suspects the authenticity of these books, must suppose that a great part of mankind, in places very distant from each other, agreed to destroy all the old genuine copies, and to forge others in their room. What is still more, he must believe, that men who hated and persecuted each other,

* See Conybeare's Sermons, and Defence of Revealed Religion, chap. 9. and Daille on the Right Use of the Fathers, Book I. p. 35, &c. London, 1675.

and who wished for nothing so earnestly, as to detect one another in any unfair proceeding, conspired together in the imposture. These circumstances render it highly incredible that the sacred books can have suffered any such alterations or corruptions as affect their general authenticity.

It is, however, natural to suppose, that in the course of seventeen hundred years*, they must have been injured, to a certain degree, either through design or negligence: and, indeed, this seems to be the truth; for it is allowed, that there are several additions and interpolations in the sacred volume, which, though they do not weaken the foundation of any doctrine, yet very often disturb the sense.

They who are acquainted with Christian antiquity well know that there are several texts, in the present copies of both the Old and New Testament, the authenticity of which cannot stand an impartial enquiry. It would be an easy work to point out various passages in our common English version of the New Testament, which have no right to appear there; because some of them are not to be found in any *one* ancient Greek copy, and others only in a very few.

* The Books of the Old Testament are of a much more ancient date.

It is much to be lamented, that the printers of these sacred books have, of late years, omitted to distinguish between doubtful texts, and those which were never questioned. Most, if not all, of the editions of the English Bible, to the time of Queen Elizabeth, and some later, did distinguish between them, by either a different type, or a particular mark. Critics and commentators have been long and laboriously employed in endeavouring to reconcile and explain passages of scripture, which appear rather inconsistent with each other. It would, perhaps, in several cases, have been more to the purpose, and more advantageous to the cause of Christianity, had they, in the first place, impartially and carefully examined, whether some of those passages were genuine or not *.

But lest any one should think that what I have here asserted is more than can be fairly proved, because of the supposed integrity of scripture; it will not be improper to point out a few places, which appear, from the strongest evidence, to be additions made to the original text.

* That some passages mentioned below are not genuine, they might easily have seen: an honest, ingenious mind, open to conviction, was the only requisite.

The first shall be that passage of the Old Testament, 1 Samuel xvii. from the eleventh to the thirty-second verse, and sixteen verses, or more, in that and the following chapters. Here we have at least thirty-six whole, besides parts of other verses, which seem to be interpolated, because they cannot be reconciled with the other parts of the same history.

The connection between the eleventh and thirty-second verses of the seventeenth chapter is perfectly natural, and agreeable to what we read at the close of the foregoing chapter. There we read, that David was Saul's armour-bearer, that is, one of his guards, who bore some of his warlike instruments; and, therefore, at such a time, he must have been in attendance near his master's person. Neither are the contents of the seventeenth chapter, from the fifty-fourth verse to the eighteenth chapter and the sixth verse, reconcileable with the sixteenth chapter, and the twenty-second verse, as will appear to every one who consults these passages. Commentators have long endeavoured to make this history consistent, but all to no effect. However, had they consulted the Vatican Septuagint, so called from its being preserved in the Vatican Library at Rome, they would have seen these difficulties entirely removed,

moved, and the whole history related, in a plain, easy, natural, and consistent manner. To strengthen the authority of the Vatican version in this place, let it be observed, that Josephus, the celebrated Jewish historian, hath omitted *some* circumstances mentioned in our present Hebrew copies; though he relates others which the Vatican has not. But they who would see the reasons on which this passage is thought an interpolation, should consult Pilkington's Remarks upon several passages of scripture, and Dr. Kennicott's Dissertations, Vol. 2. p. 418, &c. *

Again, the last verse of the seventh chapter of St. John's Gospel, and the first eleven verses of the eighth chapter, are of very suspicious authority. This whole passage is wanting in the Syriac version, in the Alexandrian † and

* "Retrospection, reviews, retouches of the pencil," will not remove the difficulties contained in the above passages. See Free Thoughts upon a Free Enquiry, &c. page 1, 3, 4.

† It is true that there are two leaves wanting in this part of the Alexandrian copy, but when we compare the number of verses, lines, and words, of any other two leaves of that MS. it will evidently appear that there was not room for 12 verses more, which the history of the adulteress consists of. See Dr. Wall on John viii.

Bodleian

Bodleian copies, and in most of the oldest MSS. Chrysostom and Theophylact leave it out, though they have written commentaries on the whole Gospel of St. John: and it is well known that not one of the ancients hath taken notice of it *.

Eusebius †, speaking of Papias, says, that he has related a story of a woman, who was accused of many crimes before the Lord; “ which relation” adds Eusebius, “ is contained in the gospel according to the “ Hebrews.” But Dr. Whitby thinks that the woman whom Papias referred to, was not this adulteress, but the woman of Samaria ‡, because the former was accused but of one,

* See Maldonat on John viii. Father Simon’s critical History of the text of the New Testament, chap. VII. and XIII. Hammond on John vii. 53. and Le Clerc’s Supplement. In the Cathedral Church of Vercelli, in Italy, there is an ancient MS. said to be written by Eusebius, Bishop of that city, about the year 354, and published at Rome, 1749, by Joseph Blanchini, in his “ Evangeliarium quadruplex, Latinæ versiones anti-
“ quæ, seu veteris Italicæ;” in which the last verse of the 7th ch. of John, and the first eleven verses of the 8th ch. are wanting. This MS. is mentioned by Montfaucon, in his *Diarium Italicum*. Lardner, vol. IV. p. 370. 1788.

† Eusebius *Eccles. Hist.* B. iii. ch. 39. ‡ John iv.
and

and the latter of many such sins *. This, however, is by no means probable, because the woman of Samaria, was not accused *before*, but, *by* our Lord.

When Eusebius says, that this story was to be found in the Gospel according to the Hebrews, it seems to be implied, that it was wanting in the four Gospels which are now received as genuine. Tertullian, towards the beginning of the third century, rails against this story as favouring lewdness. Jerom and Augustin say, that, in their time, about the latter end of the fourth century, the Greek christians had left it out of their copies. In short, there are many reasons to suspect that it is not a part of the original Gospel; but inserted, perhaps, with the approbation of Papias, and of some other ancient persons in the church, as a story related by St. John †.

Farther, the seventh verse of the fifth chapter of St. John's first general Epistle is wanting in all the manuscript Greek copies that are esteemed for their antiquity and authority. It is wanting in the old manuscript in the Vatican library at Rome, and in the

* Whitby on the Place. † See Beza and Doddridge.

Alexandrian manuscript, now in the British Museum; both of which, according to the opinion of the best critics, are above nine, if not above twelve hundred years old.

This text is wanting, likewise, in all the ancient versions: in the Italic or old Latin version, made before the time of Jerom; in the Syriac, Arabic, Æthiopic, Coptic, Persic, and in the ancient copies of the Armenian versions. It is wanting in the Russian and old French versions: and there are many editions of the English bible, in which this verse is printed in a different type, or with some particular mark, as of doubtful origin: nor is it once cited in the genuine works of any Greek father, before the time of Jerom.

In answer to those who suppose that it was erased by Arius, or by some of his followers, Dr. Mill says, that it was not to be found in any Greek copy for 150 Years before Arius was born. This author, however, hath used his utmost endeavours to support its authenticity; but he hath defended it in such a manner as will by no means be satisfactory to a judicious critic*. They who are desirous of

* See Dr. Wall on this verse, and Father Simon's critical History.

seeing this point settled, may consult Dr. Mill's Dissertation on this verse; Dr. George Benson on the same in the second volume of his Paraphrase and Notes on the Epistles; Mr. Emlyn's Tracts, and Sir Isaac Newton*. These authors, it is presumed, will convince every impartial enquirer, that the passage is not a genuine part of scripture.

There are some whole books of the New Testament which, in the opinion of one of the best critics this age hath produced, are of doubtful authority: such as the Epistle to the Hebrews, the Epistle of James, the second of Peter, the second and third of John, the Epistle of Jude, and the Revelation; all which, the Epistle to the Hebrews and the Epistle of James excepted, are now wanting in the best and most ancient copies of the Syriac version. The canon received by Chrysostom, about the end of the fourth, and, it should seem, by Theodoret, also, about the beginning of the

* See also Tremellius's marginal note on this verse, in his edition of the Syriac New Testament. Mr. Travis has lately attempted, with great zeal, to support the authenticity of this text; but his endeavours, notwithstanding the confidence with which he writes, and the praises that have been bestowed upon him, will finally prove as abortive as any preceding ones of the same kind.

fifth century, was the same with the Syriac. The sentiments of Dr. Lardner on this subject, he hath thus expressed.

“ I have been sometimes apt to think, that
 “ the best Canon of the New Testament,
 “ would be that which may be collected from
 “ Eusebe of Cæsarea, and seems to have been
 “ the Canon of some in his time. The Canon
 “ should consist of two classes. In the first
 “ should be those books which, he assures us,
 “ were then *universally acknowledged*, and had
 “ been all along received by all catholic christ-
 “ tians. These are the four Gospels, the Acts
 “ of the Apostles, thirteen Epistles of St. Paul,
 “ one Epistle of St. Peter, and one Epistle of
 “ St. John. These *only* should be of the high-
 “ est authority, from which doctrines of reli-
 “ gion may be proved.

“ In the other class, should be placed those
 “ books of which Eusebe speaks, as contradic-
 “ ted in his time, though well known; con-
 “ cerning which, there were doubts, whether
 “ they were written by the persons whose names
 “ they bear, or whether the writers were
 “ Apostles of Christ. These are, the Epistle
 “ to the Hebrews, the Epistle of James, the se-
 “ cond of Peter, the second and third of John,
 “ the Epistle of Jude, and the Revelation.

“ These

“ These should be reckoned doubtful, and con-
 “ tradicted, though many might be of opinion,
 “ that there is a good deal of reason to believe
 “ them genuine : and they should be allowed
 “ to be publicly read in Christian assemblies,
 “ for the edification of the people ; but not be
 “ alledged, as affording, *alone*, sufficient proof
 “ of any doctrine.” And a little farther he
 adds, “ that this Canon seems to have been
 “ thought of about the time of the Reforma-
 “ tion *.

I know

* Lardner’s Supplement to the Credibility of Gospel History, vol. i. page 29, &c. Lardner’s Works, edition 1788, vol. vi. page 16.

That the Canon of the Old Testament was in an unsettled state about the time of the Reformation, is certain.

“ Whatever book in the Elde Testament ys oute yes
 “ XXV. byfore sayd shall be sette among Apocrifas ; that
 “ ys, withoute autorite of byleve, therefore ye Boke of
 “ Wysdom and Ecclesiastici, and Judith and Tobie, be
 “ not of byleve. The first Boke of Machabeys was
 “ founden wrytten in Ebreu, and the seconde Boke of
 “ Machabeis was wretton furst in Greek. Jerom saith,
 “ all this sentence in ye prolog on ye Furst Book of
 “ Kynges. Also ye Booke of Baruc and the Pistill of
 “ Jerome, be not of the autorite of the Bible, anempt
 “ the Ebreis. Nay, the preyer of Manasses, as Jerome
 “ witnesseth, and how meche of the Booke of Hester,
 “ and of Daniel, ys of autorite anempt ye Ebreys and
 “ in

I know not whether that remarkable passage
1 Cor. xvi. 22, be wanting in any copy of that
Epistle: however, it seems to have a severity
and passion in it not entirely consistent with the
benevolent spirit of the gospel. Besides, it is
introduced very unnaturally.

Verse 21. "The salutation of me Paul, with
" mine own hand."

22. "If any man love not the Lord Jesus
" Christ,

" in Ebreu, it ys told in the same bokes by Jerome by-
" self, &c.

" Yf the furst book of Esdre, and ye book of Nemye,
" ben nombred for two, as Grekes and Latyns usen,
" and yf men taken Judith for a book of holy scripture,
" as the general congregation of Clergie dide at ye seyne
" of Nycene, as Jerom wytteneffeth in ye prolog of
" Judith: (then) in ye Elde Test. ben XXVII bokyes
" of byleue. Also Ecclesiastici was written in Ebreu,
" and ye Book of Wyfdom ys not anemptes Ebreis, but
" sowneth Greek eloquence; and some elde writers
" affirmen yt ye Sen. Filo made hit. yfore as Holy
" Church redeth Judith and Tobye and the Bookes of
" Machabeis, but resseyueth not them among holy
" scriptures: So the Church redeth these two bokes
" Ecclesiastici and Sapiens to edifying of ye peple,
" not to conferme ye autorite of techyng of Holy
" Church. Jerom seith yis pleyndly in ye prolog of
" Proverbs.—De libris apocryphis his dictis in præmia;
" in ipso libro ubi agit de contentis librorum singulorum,
" libris,

“ Christ, let him be Anathema, Maranatha.”
 “ (accursed, the Lord cometh *.)

23. “ The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be
 “ with you.” The 21st and 23d verses should
 be joined together, because the latter is the very
 salutation mentioned in the former. “ The
 “ salutation of me Paul with mine own hand.
 “ The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with

“ libris. 2. “ Tobia, Sapientia et Ecclesiastici, disertis
 “ verbis rejicit. The book of Tobie is not of byleue—
 “ the book of Wisdom, though it be not a book of by-
 “ leue techeth meche right wysnes—though Ecclesi-
 “ astici be no book of byleue, hit techeth meche wys-
 “ dom.”

Humfred. Hodii, de biblicorum textibus originalibus,
 &c. p. 658. Col. 101. Oxon. 1705.

The above extracts were taken by Dr. Hody from a
 parchment manuscript, in University College, Oxford;
 said to be written by Jo. Wicklesse. The hand is Obadiah
 Walker's, master of that College before the revolution.
 The following words, written at the beginning of this
 manuscript, “ Hic liber videtur scriptus fuisse à Jo.
 “ Wicklesse,” are supposed to have been inserted by
 Walker, in order to increase its value.

Dr. Hody, in pages 644, &c. of the above work, hath
 given the number and order of the Sacred Books, as re-
 ceived by different persons, at different times. The ca-
 non is much the same with that which is now generally
 received by Protestants.

* The words Maran-atha are omitted by Ignatius in
 his Epistle to the Antiochians, p. 86, edit. Js. Vossii,
 1646; and by Theodoret, as Dr. Mill hath observed.

“ you.”

“you.” This is the Apostle’s usual way of closing his Epistles. See Colof. iv. 18. 2 Thes. iii. 17, 18. When St. Paul, at other times, is speaking of the unbelieving Jews, who not only did not love, but greatly hated, the Lord Jesus Christ, he always expresseth the strongest affection for them. See the beginning of the 9th and of the 10th Chapters of his Epistle to the Romans. If this verse be really authentic, Mr. Locke hath given the most rational explanation of it, when he says, that it alluded to the false apostle, who disturbed the peace of the Corinthian Church. However, it is introduced in a place, and in a manner so contrary to St. Paul’s customary method of writing, and to the divine temper which is displayed in all his Epistles, that doubts concerning its authenticity may naturally arise in the mind of every thoughtful enquirer.

I know not, also, whether Luke ii. 2. be wanting in any copy. Many learned critics have endeavoured to reconcile it with history, but not satisfactorily. After all their labors, I am inclined to believe that it came into the text from the margin of some scholiast, who confounded the registering under Herod, with the noted tax made by Cyrenius, after the death of Archelaus, the son of Herod,

Acts v. 37, A. D. 8. U. C. 761, when Judea was made a Roman province. See Mr. Bowyer's Conjectures on the New Testament*.

S E C T. II.

Some farther Observations on the Canon of the New Testament, and on the Characters of some of the ancient Fathers from whom we have received it.

FROM what hath been observed, in the foregoing Section, the supposed *perfect* integrity of the sacred volume, will appear to be without foundation; because it seems undeniable that it is, in several places, interpolated; and, perhaps, in more places than we at present suspect. The design of the following pages is to hint some doubts concerning the authenticity of a part of scripture which hath long exercised the pens of the most learned divines, but which seems still attended with very considerable difficulties. As a free enquiry into

* That Luke ii. 2. is an interpolation, has been thought probable by some writers; but Dr. Lardner hath not enlarged upon that opinion. He just mentions it in a note, edition 1788, vol. i. page 299, note, y. See also what he says of John v. 4. edition 1788, vol. ii. p. 426.

subjects

subjects of this nature may be liable to misconstruction, I here think proper to declare, that I am a sincere and firm believer in the divine original of the gospel; and that it is a real desire of serving the cause of true and genuine Christianity which hath induced me to lay my doubts, and the reasons of them, before the public. If I am wrong in my conjectures, an opportunity is given to some more able enquirer, to vindicate a part of scripture which hath furnished unbelievers with the strongest objections to Revelation. The passages here meant are the genealogy of Christ in St. Matthew, and some other parts of the first and second chapters of that Evangelist.

Before we more directly enter upon our enquiry, it may not be amiss to premise some farther observations on the Canon of Scripture, and the character and authority of those ancient Christian writers from whom we received it*.

The

* The first collection of the Gospels, and other books of the New Testament, was made about the beginning of the second Century. Eusebius, Eccles. Hist. B. III. ch. 24, says, that the Gospels by St. Matthew, St. Mark, St. Luke, and St. John, were declared canonical by the last named Apostle. See Mosheim's Eccles. Hist. Dr. Maclaine's Translation, in quarto, London, 1765, page 49. See, also, by the same hand, Institutiones Historiæ

The christian Church, though designed to be the mansion of charity, was, from the very beginning, disturbed by intestine divisions, which were occasioned sometimes, by points of doctrine, and at other times, by rites and ceremonies. The principal authors of these divisions were branded with the name of heretics, and their peculiar sentiments were called Heresies.

This is the reason that, in examining the progress of Truth, we meet with many and great difficulties *; for the heads of all religious sects met with the most injurious treatment from their adversaries; and their tenets and opinions were often shamefully misrepresented. But what is still worse, and more to be lamented, the party which was called Orthodox, took all the care they could, to destroy the writings of those who were called Heretics; so that we are, in a great measure, forced to gather our opinion of them, and of their particular sentiments, from the testimonies

Historiæ Christianæ majores, sæc. prim. quarto, 1739. page 210. " Satis est, scire nos, sæculo secundo medio, " plurimos et præcipuos eorum Librorum, ex quibus no- " vum Testamentum constat, jam pro divinis, ubique ha- " bitos, et uno volumine, comprehensos esse." &c.

* See Mosheim's Instit. Major. pag. 321, &c.

testimonies of their adversaries *. In every enquiry, therefore, in which the scripture is concerned, the wisest and safest method is to understand the term, Heretic, in a general sense, as denoting a person who, either directly or indirectly, occasioned any disturbance among christians. This method alone is safe; because calling men Heretics, and their sentiments, Heresies, was very common among the ancient contending parties; and, indeed, was a method taken as frequently against truth as against error.

It is a fault with which many eminent writers are chargeable, that they extol the merits of the Fathers of the first four centuries, and represent them as almost perfect; whereas in truth several of them were very much tinctured with Enthusiasm, or bigotry. A notion hath long prevailed, that those among them who were called orthodox, had, in a

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manner,

* That books thought heretical by the orthodox, were destroyed by them, is acknowledged by Dupin.

“ The Catholics had such a dread of the books of Heretics, that they have not preserved so much as those which had no relation to their Heresy, and which might have been useful to the Church: for which reason we have scarcely any books of Heretics left.”

Lardner, vol. iv. page 396. 1788. See also Mosheim, *ubi supra*, p. 325, &c. note.

manner, *no* fault at all; but that those who were called Heretics, were men, not only of bad principles, but of corrupt morals; whereas the contrary to this was often the truth of the case. The Heretics, as they were usually styled, frequently excelled in justness of sentiment, and in purity of life. Several of them were men not merely of great learning and eloquence, but of exalted piety and virtue, though, sometimes, they had considerable degrees of enthusiasm and superstition. However, the orthodox Fathers were not less guilty in this respect; and, besides, they were often avaritious, cruel, unrelenting, and persecuting.

But though several of the Fathers were, in some instances, very blame-worthy; yet there were others of them, who were great and excellent men, justly celebrated for learning, eloquence, and goodness. Their principal faults may, perhaps, be attributed to the warmth of their zeal for christianity. Their strong and earnest desire to promote the cause of the Gospel, might, on some occasions, incline them to make use of indiscreet, and, even, unlawful methods to support it. There is no doubt, but that both the orthodox and heretical Fathers, were guilty of some pious
frauds.

frauds *. We should not, therefore, yield too hasty an assent to what either side advances. We should attentively and impartially examine the evidence on both sides, concerning those points wherein they seem to differ, and always receive that which appears to us to be best supported. The strongest evidence should prevail with us, and not the name or character of the persons by whom it is produced. What we chiefly expect from these ancient writers is their testimony to facts, and to the authenticity of the books wherein those facts are recorded ; and here their testimony appears to be unquestionable. Their great number, their general good character for integrity, their fortitude and perseverance, even unto death, in defence of christianity, leave us little or no room to doubt of their veracity.

They who were called Heretics agreed with their adversaries in affirming the truth of Christianity. However they might differ about some particular points, relative to the nature and design of the Gospel, they all acknowledged a divine revelation : and though some
received,

* The opinion that the violation of truth was lawful to support a great and good cause, was not peculiar to the Fathers ; but was the fault of the age in which they lived. Mosheim. de Reb. Christ. p. 166.

received, into their Canon, books which others rejected, yet they *all* owned, that there were certain books, stamped with the divine authority, which contained a true history of Christ, and of his doctrines. Amidst all their differences and quarrels, they bore united testimony to *this* very interesting and important fact,

S E C T. III.

Some Account of the Nazarenes, Ebionites, Cerinthians, and Carpocratians, who used the Syro-chaldaic Copy of St. Matthew's Gospel.

THOUGH many were branded with the name of Heretics who did not deserve it, yet there were several, in the earliest ages of the church, who really did *deserve* that title, in the worst sense of the word. Even in the days of the Apostles, there were certain pretended reformers, who, not contented with what the Apostles taught, endeavoured to set up a religion drawn out of their own licentious imaginations. The names of some of them are recorded in the New Testament, who were either apostates from, or corrupters of, the
true

true faith. Such were Hymenæus, Philetus, Hermogenes, Diotrephes, &c.

But the sects with whom we are more particularly concerned in our enquiry, are the Nazarenes, Ebionites, Cerinthians, and Carpocratians*.

The church was troubled very early with disputes concerning the law of Moses, and the Jewish rites. Those christians who set Moses and Jesus on a level in point of authority, divided themselves into two sects, different in their sentiments; the Nazarenes, and Ebionites. The former are not placed, by the ancient christian writers, in the Heretical Register †. Neither Irenæus, Clemens, Justin Martyr,

* All christians, during the first and second centuries, seem to have been called by the name of some sect or Heresy. There were, properly, during the first and second centuries, but two Heresies. The one denied that there is only one principle of all things; and affirmed that our Lord was man in appearance only. The other asserted, that there was but one principle, and that our Lord was only a man. This is said by Theodoret, about the beginning of the 5th century. Lardner, vol. 9, p. 233, &c. and notes, 1788. See also Mosheim, Institut. Hist. Christ. majores. sæcul. prim. Cap. quint. sect. 1. notes, p. 309.

† “ Simplicem valde Nazaræorum religionem fuisse, et omnis subtilitatis expertem, nemo dubitare posset. Hinc
et

Martyr, Tertullian, nor Eusebius, did ever put them into that list. Epiphanius, Bishop of Salamis in the Island of Cyprus, about the year of Christ 370, is the first writer who calls the Nazarenes, Heretics*. But the Ebionites, from the

et pauci tantum in illis errores notati sunt. Plerique veterum nihil fere vitio illis vertunt, quam immoderatum illud, erga majorum ritus et cæremonias, studium. Aliqui tamen negatæ quoque divinitatis servatoris nostri eos non obscure arguunt. Ad duas, igitur, quæstiones, redeunt omnia quæ de Nazaræorum singularibus opinionibus differi possunt. Primo, enim, quid de ipso servatore nostro sanctissimo; deinde quid de rituum Mosai-corum necessitate senserint, disquirendum est."

Mosheim Instit. Major. p. 470.

See also by the same author, *Vindiciæ antiquæ christianorum disciplinæ adversus celeberrimi viri Jo. Tolandi Hiberni Nazarenum*. Hambergi. 1722. p. 141, &c. To these may be added another modern writer, "Addunt alii Naziræos, qui tamen aut Christiani ex Judæis, nulla heterodoxia infames, nisi quod forte nimium Judaicis quibusdam ceremoniis adhærerent, aut si inter Hæreticos numerandi, tantæ ætatis esse non videntur." Lampe Synop. Historiæ Sacræ, lib. 2. c. 2. p. 87. Trajecti and Rhenam. 1735. "Nazaræorum ante Epiphanium nulla extat memoria." Mosheim. Hist. Christ. p. 465, &c.

* The perfect silence of early antiquity, with respect to the peculiar religious sentiments of the Nazarenes, yields a strong argument in their favor. Philaster, who published an account of all Heresies from the creation of the

the beginning, seem to have been considered as a sect which held tenets destructive of the fundamental principles of the Gospel.

The term, Nazarene *, was not originally the name of a particular sect, but of all the disciples of Christ. Those whom the Greeks called Christians, the Jews called Nazarenes. Thus Tertullus reproached St. Paul with being a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes, Acts xxiv. 5. He could not mean a particular sect of Christians, but the whole body in general; and it is well known, that the Apostles thought it no reproach to be called the disciples of Jesus of Nazareth. See Acts ii. 22.

However,

the world to his own time, about the year of Christ, 430, is totally silent about them. And we find that the truly learned and judicious Dr. Lardner, met with nothing to their disadvantage in any of the early writers. They are not mentioned in his History of the Heretics. And his four Discourses on Philip II. 5—11, since published, clearly shew, that he considered the Nazarenes as catholic and orthodox Christians. Lardner, vol. 9, p. 223, &c. and vol. 10, p. 632, edit. 1788. We may hence conclude, that their Gospel was not so much corrupted as hath been usually supposed. Otherwise, we might naturally expect that Irenæus, Justin Martyr, Tertullian, &c. would have taken notice of it. They seem, therefore, to have been considered as Catholic Christians for nearly four centuries.

* Mosheim's Instit. major. p. 465. &c.

However, the term, Nazarene, it would seem, was very soon applied, by the Christians, to those converts, from among the Jews, who considered the observance of the Mosaic rites as necessary to the salvation of all who were of Jewish extraction.

These believed that Jesus was born of a Virgin *, and that he was, in a certain manner, united to the Divine Nature. They refused to abandon the ceremonies prescribed by the law of Moses, but were far from attempting to impose them upon the Gentile Christians. They, also, rejected the additions made to the Mosaic rites by the Scribes and Pharisees. They did not, during the first century, break
off

* Mosheim says, that *all* the first Nazarenes believed our Savior to be conceived by the Holy Spirit. “ Ego, quidem, rebus omnibus accurate ponderatis, id quidem constare arbitror, Nazaræos ab Ebionæis, sejunctos fuisse, Christumque judicasse, non ex Josepho et Maria, sed ex Virgine, solâ divinâ virtute, natum esse.” *Instit. major.* p. 474. In the same page he adds, “ Legem Moſis, quæ ritus præſcribit, majoris, quam fas eſt, a Nazaræis æſtimatam eſſe, omni vacat controverſia. Immo veterum aliqui, maximo Hieronymus, dicere videntur, nulla re alia, quam hoc uno immoderato erga cærimonias majorum ſtudio, a reliquis eos Chriſtianis ſecretos fuiſſe. See, alſo, by the ſame author, “ De rebus Chriſt. ante Conſtant.” *ſect.* 39, and notes, p. 328. Helmſtad, 1753.

off communion with those who differed from them in these matters ; on which account they were still considered as brethren, though of the weaker sort ; and were treated, with the greatest degree of tenderness and gentleness, by Christians of more just and enlarged notions. The Apostle Paul seems to have a particular view to *these* Nazarenes in some of his Epistles ; see Romans xiv. and several passages in his first Epistle to the Corinthians. They continued to the time of Epiphanius, for he had some knowledge of them. “ He stiles “ them Heretics,” says Dr. Wall, “ for no “ reason that I can see, but that they, to- “ gether with their Christian faith, continued “ the use of circumcision, and of the Jewish “ rites, which things, St. Paul never blamed “ in a Jewish Christian, though in the Gentile “ Christian he did : and Epiphanius, adds he, “ with the same propriety, as far as I can per- “ ceive, might have blamed James Bishop of “ Jerusalem, and those thousands of Jewish “ Christians with him, concerning whom “ James said to Paul, thou seest, brother, “ how many thousands of Jews there are “ which believe, and they are all zealous of
the

“ the law *. They did not, however, frequent the ordinary assemblies of Christians, till the days of Epiphanius ; for, when Jerusalem was the second time destroyed by Adrian, about the year of Christ 135, they withdrew themselves, and had separate meetings ; and *then* they were, by *some*, numbered with those sects who had departed from the pure doctrine of Christ.

The Ebionites, according to the best writers, derived their name not from a man, named Ebion, but from the Hebrew word עֲבִיּוֹן egenus, pauper †, that is, the poor of Jerusalem ; the first converts to Christianity, from whom they were, probably, descended. Their sentiments were very different from those of the Nazarenes : for they considered the law of Moses as of perpetual obligation on all believers, both Jews and Gentiles ; on which account, they rejected all St. Paul’s writings, and reckoned him an apostate. The Ebionites were divided into two sects, one of which

* Acts xxi. 20. Wall’s preface to Critical Notes on the New Testament, p. 12.

† Mosheim’s Instit. major. p. 478. Dr. Lardner and others think they were so called from their low opinion concerning the person of Christ. Edit. 1788, vol. 7, p. 20. Mosheim De Reb. Christ. p. 331, &c.

believed

believed that Jesus was born of a virgin, and the other that he was the son of Joseph and Mary *. They were not only attached to the Mosaic rites, but received, with an equal veneration, all the superstitions of their ancestors, and the ceremonies and traditions which the Pharisees and others had added to the law. The term, Ebionite, seems, for a considerable time, to have been applied to all Christians of Jewish extraction; for Origen, in the third century, says, that the Jews who believed in Christ, were called Ebionites *: however, he either

* Οὗτοι δ' εἰσιν οἱ διττοὶ Εβιωναῖοι ἡτοὶ ἐκ παρθενοῦ ὁμολογοῦντες ὅμοιως ἡμῖν τὸν Ἰησοῦν, ἡ οὐχ οὕτω γεγενῆσθαι, ἀλλ' ὡς τοῖς λοιποῖς ἀνθρώποις. Origen Contr. Cels. lib. v. sect. 61. Edit. Delarue, Paris 1733. Eusebius, l. iii. cap. 27. Irenæus lib. i. cap. 26. edit. Feuardent, Colon. 1596. Lutet. Paris 1544, and Lardner's Jewish and Heathen Testimonies, Vol. I. p. 17. London 1764. Edit. 1788, Vol. VII. p. 19, &c. and note t. See also Eusebius Eccles. Hist. L. II. Cap. 17.

“ Origen would not have expressly written against praying to Christ, as he has done, if it had been the practice of Christians, from the earliest ages.

Lindsey's Apology.

† Καὶ Εβιωναῖοι χρηματίζουσιν οἱ ἀπὸ Ἰουδαίων τὸν Ἰησοῦν ὡς Χριστὸν παραδείξαμενοι. Origen. cont. Cels. Lib. II. Ch. I. p. 385. Paris 1733.

D

applied

applied that name to the Nazarenes, or confounded these two distinct sects of Christians together.

Upon the whole, it seems clear that when the Nazarenes and the Ebionites are considered, not as Christians in general, but as distinct sects of Christians, they ought to be referred to the second century. Ecclesiastical historians do, indeed, commonly rank them among the separate sects of the first century, and the Apostolic age; but, in so doing, these historians seem to have forgotten that, for some time, all Christians were called Nazarenes, and all the Jewish converts Ebionites †.

The opinions of Cerinthus contained a mixture of the doctrine of Christ with the errors of the Jews, and the fancies of the Gentile philo-

† A fuller account of the Ebionites may be found in Lardner, vol. vii, p. 19—24, and notes, vol. 5, p. 250. The Ossens, Ebionites, and Nazarenes, seem to have used the same books, vol. ix, p. 504, &c. The latter Nazarenes, may be thought have to been the same with the Sampsaens and Elcesaites, *ibid.* p. 504, &c. and notes. See also vol. iii, p. 541, note, h.

Justin Martyr, in his Dialogue with Trypho, seems to own that such Jewish persons as confessed that Jesus

philosophers. He held that Jesus was the son of Joseph and Mary, and that Christ, a spiritual being, entered into the person of Jesus, while John baptized him in Jordan. He commanded his followers to worship the Supreme God, the father of Christ, in conjunction with the Son. He said, that they must retain part of the law given by Moses; but, nevertheless, that they must employ their principal attention and care to regulate their lives by the precepts of Christ. He seems, also, to have believed the Millennium, or that

was the Christ, (most probably Ebionites,) ought to be embraced and treated as brethren; and that those who denied the pre-existence or miraculous conception, should not be rejected from Christian societies. Just. Mart. p. 266, Colon. edit.

Clemens Alexandrinus, Stromat. lib. vii, cap. 17, mentions a Christian sect, called Peraciti, from the city Perea, whither some Jewish converts fled before the destruction of Jerusalem. Mosheim. Inst. Major. p. 469, and Theodoret. Hæret. Fabul. lib. 1, cap. 17, mention a sect, called Peratæ, from the name of a man. They were, probably, the same sect, and branches of the Nazarenes and Ebionites. Mosheim ubi supra, ibid. p. 481. That the Jewish believers, were not divided into two sects, the Nazarenes and Ebionites, before the reign of Adrian, is almost certain. Mosheim de reb. Christ. p. 327, &c.

Christ would reign personally on earth for a thousand years, at the end of the world †.

These are some of the notions which were entertained by Cerinthus. Others are omitted, which do not immediately concern our enquiry. The time when he flourished is a matter of doubt, for some writers place him in the first, and others in the second century *.

There is a story, related by Irenæus ‡, by Epiphanius ||, and by Eusebius §, of the Apostle John's going into a bath at Ephesus, and meeting Cerinthus there; but it does not seem probable. Irenæus and Epiphanius only say that such a report prevailed. It is observable, that though Irenæus was personally acquainted with Polycarp, who is supposed to have been the first person that related the story, yet he does not say that he himself heard

† Mosheim's Eccles. Hist. vol. i. p. 69, &c.

* Concerning the principles and sentiments of Cerenthus. See Lardner, vol. ix. p. 325, and notes. 1788. Mosheim's Inst. Major. p. 438. &c. De rebus Christ. p. 196, &c.

‡ Lib. iii. c. 3. sect. 4. edit. Mafs. || H. 30. ch. 24.

§ Eccles. Hist. Lib. iv. ch. 14. See also Lardner's Credib. part. ii. vol. i. 2d Edit. 1748. Edit. 1788. vol. ii. p. 86. Article Polycarp.

Polycarp relate it, but only that there were some who heard him give an account of it. Besides, Irenæus, and Theodoret after him, and Eusebius say, that Cerinthus was in the bath: but Epiphanius says that it was Ebion, the supposed father of the Ebionites. This disagreement about the person weakens the credit of the story, which, indeed, is now commonly rejected.

Cerinthus seems to have lived in the second century. According to some authors, he troubled the church in the time of Adrian and Antoninus Pius; according to others, he lived after Carpocrates *. Some circumstances will be taken notice of hereafter, which may render it questionable, whether he did not flourish later than hath been usually supposed.

Carpocrates, by some called, Carpocras, if he is justly represented, held very strange, and indeed very impious doctrines. He, as well as Cerinthus, asserted that Jesus was the son of Joseph and Mary †, according to the ordinary

* Mosheim's Instit. Major. p. 438, &c. Mosheim, however, thinks that he lived sooner.

† See Lampe Synopsis Historiæ Sacræ, lib. 2. c. 3. p. 104. Traject. ad Rhenum. 1735.

course of nature; and that he was distinguished from the rest of mankind by nothing but his superior fortitude and greatness of soul. The doctrines of Carpocrates, with regard to practice, were, to the highest degree, licentious. He not only allowed his disciples a full liberty to sin, but recommended to them a vicious course of life, as a matter of obligation and necessity: for he affirmed that eternal salvation was only attainable by those who had committed all sorts of crimes, and had daringly filled up the measure of iniquity. He held that lusts and passions, being implanted in our nature by God himself, had nothing criminal in them; that all actions were in their own nature indifferent, and were rendered good or evil, only by the opinions of men, or by the laws of the state; and that it was the will of God, that all things should be possessed in common, the female sex not excepted; but that human laws, by an arbitrary tyranny, branded those as robbers and adulterers, who only used their natural rights*. These doc-

* Mosheim's Eccles. Hist. vol. 1, p. 114, &c. See also, Iren. cont. Hæres. lib. 1, ch. 25, and Clem. Alex. Strom. vol. 1, lib. 3, § 2. Oxon. 1715.

trines are so enormously impious and wicked, that, bad as Carpocrates might be, we can scarce avoid believing that these accounts of him must have been carried beyond the truth †.

They who are desirous of a fuller account of these, and other heresies, may consult Mosheim's *Eccles. Hist.* of the first and second centuries; His *Institutiones Historiæ Christianæ majores, sæc. prim.* and his *Comment. de rebus Christianorum*. What is worthy of remark, they will find, that it was not unusual, in those days, i. e. in the second century, to call any man a heretic, who excelled in, or studied Philosophy, Logic, Geometry! See, also, Euseb. *Eccles. Hist.* l. v. chap. 28.

† Concerning the Carpocratians, see Lardner, vol. 9, p. 313, &c. and notes. Mosheim. *de reb. Christ.* p. 367, &c. note.

S E C T. IV.

The Genealogy, &c. wanting in some Copies of St. Matthew's Gospel. The Notion that there were two original Copies of this Gospel, published by St. Matthew, the one in Greek and the other in Hebrew or Syro-chaldaic, examined and refuted.

IT was necessary to give some account of the particular sentiments held by these ancient sects of Christians, because some of them, received a copy of St. Matthew's gospel which had not the genealogy, or, indeed, by all that appears, either the first or second chapters. We shall now proceed to lay before our readers some arguments which seem to make against the authenticity of these chapters.

In the first place, we have undoubted evidence that they were wanting in some very ancient copies of St. Matthew, which were reckoned of considerable authority.

Mr. Toland, in his *Nazarenus*, mentions an Irish copy of this Gospel, that he had seen, which had not the genealogy: for it began at ver. 18. There are several other manuscripts

manuscripts in which this Gospel begins at chap. i. ver. 18. as we learn from Mr. Aftle's Preface to a new index to the Harleian MSS. now in the British Museum.

" A most venerable exemplar of the Four
 " Gospels, of St. Jerome's version, with the
 " prefaces and canons of Eusebius; the whole
 " written in capitals, and allowed to be
 " 1200 years old. In this manuscript it is
 " observable, that the genealogy of our blessed
 " Saviour appears to be distinct, and separated from St. Matthew's Gospel. The following words, in two independent lines, occurring after the 17th verse of that chapter :

" Genealogia Hucusque.

" Incip. Evangl. Secd Matth.

" So that the Gospel begins at the 18th verse
 " of the first chapter, in the same manner, as
 " in the famous copy of the Evangelists, written in Ireland, and in another manuscript of the same kind, and of the 12th century; which MSS. are both preserved in this library. It is also observable, that the like distinction or separation of the genealogy of
 " our

“ our blessed Saviour, from the other part of
 “ St. Matthew’s Gospel, is made in the fa-
 “ mous copy of the Four Gospels, formerly
 “ belonging to King Æthelstan, and now
 “ preserved in the Cottonian library; (Tibe-
 “ rius A. II.) which book was appointed to
 “ be used by the succeeding kings of Eng-
 “ land, at the time of their taking the coro-
 “ nation oath.”

Again, “ The Latin Gospels written with
 “ red ink, about the beginning of the 11th
 “ century, and in the Anglo-normanic cha-
 “ racter. In this manuscript the genealogy of
 “ our Saviour is, also, detached from the other
 “ part of St. Matthew’s Gospel: as is, like-
 “ wise, the first part of the 18th verse of the
 “ first chapter, *Christi autem generatio sic*
 “ *erat.*” Annual Register, 1763, pages 142,
 144 *.

This circumstance, then, is particularly
 worthy of notice, that there are now extant
 copies of St. Matthew’s Gospel, in which the
 genealogy is not inserted as a part of it; be-
 cause it is a full proof that the genealogy was

* See the preface to this 2d edition.

questioned in very early ages †. As the ancient Irish and Britons used a copy of this Gospel, on the most solemn occasions, which had not the genealogy, it is apparent that there were other Christians, besides the Ebionites, who left it out; for it is not at all probable, that the Ebionites had any connection with Christians out of their own country, especially such a connection, as to prevail on the Gentiles to receive their Gospel in preference to another supposed to be more generally known, if it were not *then* allowed to have been the original of St. Matthew, and as such received by

† The genealogies by Matthew and Luke were in the copies of the Gospels, received by the Manichees; but they questioned their authenticity, about the year 227, &c. Lardner, vol. iii. p. 483—537. They were received by Arnobius, in 460. Ibid. vol. iv. p. 23. and note g. and by Chrysostom, 398. Ibid. vol. v. p. 128.

Marcion the Heretic's principles were very absurd; and to support them, he mutilated the Scriptures. He struck out of St. Luke's Gospel the first and second chapters entirely, and read the first verse of the third chapter different from our copies. "In the fifteenth year of Tiberius Cæsar, God descended into Capernaum, a city of Galilee." Lardner, vol. ix. p. 394, and note o.

Apelles, about the year 160, rejected the beginning of St. Matthew's Gospel, if he received the other parts of it; and also the chapters of St. Luke which Marcion rejected. Lardner, vol. ix. p. 447. 1788.

the

the Church. To say that in the days of Æthelstan, about the year 925, the Christians in Britain would use the best copy they could get, is to say either that the corrupted copies were more numerous, or more easily procured than those which were incorrupt; neither of which could be the case in this island, about eight or nine hundred years after the publication of the Gospels †. The plain inconsistencies

† That the religious worship of the ancient Britons, Irish, and Albanian Scots, differed in some points from that of the Church of Rome, so late as the twelfth century, is evident from the itinerary of Giraldus Cambrensis. He tells us, that Baldwin, Archbishop of Canterbury, in the reign of Henry II. travelled thro' Wales to convert the inhabitants to the Romish faith.

That it was different about the close of the sixth century, appears from the venerable Bede. The first Saxon Christian Prince was Ethelbert, who began to reign about the year 568, of Christ. He was converted by Austin the monk. But that the Gospel was known and professed in this island long before that year is evident from this circumstance. Austin, about the year 602, in order to prevail upon the British Bishops to submit to the Roman pontiff, offered them three conditions. First, that they should celebrate Easter at the same time with the Roman Church. Secondly, that they should administer baptism after the Roman manner; Thirdly, that they should assist him and his colleagues in preaching

cies between this genealogy, and the Old Testament history, might easily be perceived, and

ing the Gospel to the Saxons; adding, that if they complied with these demands, they might follow their own customs, though different from those of the Roman Church: but, says Bede, “illi nihil horum se facturos, neque illum pro archiepiscopo habituros esse, respondabant.” Bede Eccles. Hist. Gentis Anglorum, lib. ii. c. 2. p. 57. Colon. Agrip. 1601. and Bishop Lloyd on the government of the British Churches, p. 66, and 81. edit. 1703. In the words of Dr Jortin, “the British Bishops resisted him boldly and justly, and would not acknowledge the usurper for their arch-bishop.”

Remarks on Ecclesiastical History, vol. iv. p. 416, &c. edit. 1773.

In the year 303, &c. of Christ, the martyrs in Britain were numerous, as appears from Tertullian, Origen and Bede, lib. i. c. 7. We are also informed by Eusebius, Chrysostom, and Theodoret, that the gospel was known in this island long before the arrival of the Saxons, in 449.

In 429, Germanus, a saint of that age, accompanied by one Lupus, came to Britain to check the progress of Pelagianism, which first appeared about the year 382. Bede, lib. i. ch. 17. p. 19.

If we had not these positive and direct proofs, that Christianity was planted in Britain at a very early age, we might naturally infer it from this circumstance. It was established in Gaul before the year 177 of Christ, as undeniably appears from the epistle of the Churches of Vienne and Lyons, and from Irenæus, who, it is thought com-

and suspicions concerning its authenticity be soon spread abroad: but as all the ancients were fond of mystical and allegorical interpretations

posed that epistle. Is it credible that a people so near to Britain, could be acquainted with the Gospel for about 300 years, at least, and not communicate so important a matter to their next neighbours? Could Irenæus and others, who were so very desirous of spreading the knowledge of Christianity every where, neglect a people so near to, and who were descended from them? Upon the whole, it seems most probable, that Christianity was planted in this island, sometime in the second century, perhaps in the beginning of it. I think that the conversion of the Britains is placed too early by Mr. Rowland in his *Mona Antiqua*, p. 138. 1766, and by Gildas. See Warrington's *History of Wales*, p. 536, &c. Mosheim. *de Reb. Christ.* p. 214, &c. However it is not at all likely that this was done by St. Paul, as Bishop Stillingfleet is disposed to think. Origines *Britannicæ*, ch. i. 1710. See also Usherii *Britannicæ Ecclesiæ Antiquitates*, ch. iii. p. 17. 1687.

Before I conclude this long note, I beg leave to observe, that Lucius, said to be the first Christian King, began to reign about the year 165 of Christ; and his conversion is said to have been in the year 177, the very year in which the Epistle from the Churches of Vienne and Lyons dated. This circumstance will dispose us to think, that Britain derived the knowledge of Christianity from Gaul; and perhaps, that there is more truth in the tradition, that Lucius was the first Christian King in Britain,

pretations of scripture, they could not so readily discern the inconsistencies in the other parts of the two chapters.

Epiphanius * abovementioned, who lived in the fourth century, about the year of Christ 368, or later, and who wrote against all the heresies that had sprung up in the church to his time, expressly says, that the Ebionites †, used

tain, than hath lately been supposed. Dates and circumstances are of considerable weight in historical facts. See Bede, lib. i. cap. 4. Mosheim's de Reb. Christ. p. 216, &c. Dr. Powel's edition of Pont. Virun and Giraldus. London 1585. See also Usher on the Irish and British religion; and in Toland's Nazarenus, an account of an Irish manuscript, p. 1, &c. But I lay no stress upon this historical tradition.

* Jerom, his contemporary, speaks of Epiphanius with great commendation, and says, that he was a man of five languages; that is, he understood Greek, Syriac, Hebrew, Egyptian, and Latin, (in part.) Jerom. adv. Ruffin. Apolog. vol. ii. p. 74. K. et p. 78. D. Paris, 1546.

See also Lardner's Credib. part 2. vol. viii. Art. Epiphanius, edit. 1788, vol. iv. p. 311. Epiphanius must have known whether the Gospel of the Nazarenes, &c. had these chapters or not: for, as he was a native of Palestine, it is highly probable that he had seen it.

† In the first edition it was said that the Nazarenes, the Cerinthians, and Carpocratians, as well as the Ebionites,

used a Gospel, which began with these words :
 “ It came to pass in the days of Herod, King
 “ of Judea, that John came baptizing with
 “ the baptism of repentance, in the river Jor-
 “ dan :” And a little farther, it adds, “ when
 “ the people were baptized, Jesus also came,
 “ and was baptized by John ; and when he
 “ came out of the water, the Spirit of God
 “ came down in the shape of a dove,” &c. *
 Hence it appears that the Gospel of St. Mat-
 thew which they received, began at what
 now is called the third chapter.

We have certain evidence, as will presently
 appear, that there was, in very early days, an
 Hebrew or Syro-chaldaic Gospel by St. Mat-
 thew. This Gospel was the only one which,
 as it would seem, was acknowledged to be of
 authority by the Ebionites, and perhaps by
 others ;

nites, used a Gospel by St. Matthew which began at
 the third chapter. Epiphanius only says, that the Ebi-
 onites used such a Gospel. This mistake was occasion-
 ed by a reliance upon the authority of Mosheim.

† Adv. Hæres. 28, 29, 30. But there is a great mis-
 take here, either in Epiphanius or in the Ebionite Gos-
 pel which he saw : for John could not come baptizing
 in the days of Herod the King, that is, of Herod
 the Great ; for, as generally believed, he had been dead
 about 28 years, in the 15th of Tiberius. See preface.

others; and it doth not appear that this copy had the genealogy, * or even the first or second chapters. The authority of so ancient a copy must be acknowledged to be of very considerable weight in deciding this question; especially, when it is remembered, that we have no *certain* references or allusions to these chapters, till the days of Celsus the Epicurean, about 150, or later, who makes a mock of the angel's warning Joseph to fly into Egypt: and of Irenæus, about 178.

Independently, therefore, of the question, whether this Hebrew Gospel was the original copy of St. Matthew or not, the omission of these chapters, in so ancient a copy, is a presumption against them. The reception of this Hebrew copy by the Ebionites, and, most probably, by the Nazarenes, yields a strong argument, also, in favour of its authority: for they seem to have been the remains of the first Jewish converts to Christianity, and lived in Judea till the days of the Emperor Adrian; during which time they were treated with the utmost tenderness, and called brethren by all the Catholic Christians.

* See Lardner, edition 1788, vol. ii. page 308, &c. Mosheim De Reb. Christ. page 328.

But it is by no means probable, that they would have been thus treated, had they used a corrupted Gospel. The Nazarenes and Ebionites were not unlike in several things, though it is plain that the latter had made some additions to the old system of the former.

Thus Epiphanius says, that the Nazarene Gospel was *πληρὲστατον*, *most entire*, but that the Ebionite Gospel was *οὐχ ὅλῳ πληρὲστατον*, *not most entire, or not altogether entire**. The former was probably the true original copy of St. Matthew; and the latter might be, in some degree, corrupted. Irenæus, Eusebius, and Epiphanius, say, that the Gospel received by the Nazarenes and Ebionites, was the Gospel of Matthew altered, in some things, according to their different sentiments. This seems, also, to have been the opinion of Dr. Lardner. See his *Credib.* part 2. vol. i. page 252; edition 1788, vol. ii. page 114.

* Consult Epiphanius's account of the Nazarenes and Ebionites. See these passages at large, below. Dr. Mill, who will be allowed to have been a very good judge of such matters, and who will not be suspected of partiality in this case, thinks, that the Nazarenes and Ebionites had the truest copy of St. Matthew's Hebrew Gospel.

Thus

Thus far we have reasoned on the supposition that St. Matthew published his Gospel in Greek, and not in Hebrew; though all parties grant that there was an Hebrew Gospel, in very early times; and all the ancients, with one consent, assure us, that this was the original of St. Matthew. Thus Papias, Irenæus, Origen, Eusebius, Cyril of Jerusalem, Epiphanius, Gregory Nazianzen, Jerom, Augustin, Chrysostom, the author of a Latin commentary on St. Matthew, ascribed to Chrysostom, Isidore of Seville, Theophylact, Euthymius, Nicephorus Callisti, and the author of the synopsis of scripture, which bears the name of Athanasius, agree that St. Matthew wrote his Gospel in Hebrew. These are all orthodox writers: we shall hereafter see, that this was, also, affirmed by those who were called Heretics.

This, indeed, was never questioned till of late days; for Erasmus was one of the first who, in opposition to all antiquity, asserted that Matthew wrote in Greek: and he has been followed by many eminent moderns; by Cardinal Cajetan, Oecolampadius, Flaccius Illyricus, Calvin, Vossius, and other foreigners; and by Dr. Lightfoot, Dr. Whitby,

Mr. Jerem. Jones, Dr. Lardner, and other English divines.

Pere Simon says, that neither Erasmus, nor Oecolampadius, understood Hebrew; and that Cajetan was skilled in neither Hebrew nor Greek. Crit. Hist. of the Text of the New Testament, page 40, 1689. But, in a dispute of this nature, the united testimony of the ancients is certainly much more conclusive than all the reasonings and fine-spun arguments of the moderns *.

* Nor is this opinion of an original Syro-chaldaic Gospel by St. Matthew, on this day, singular; for it is supported by one of the most learned critics and scholars of the present age; I mean the eminent professor Michaelis of Gottingen. It was the opinion of the learned Dr. Conyers Middleton: Reflections on the four Evangelists, page 53, and on the Gift of Tongues, page 103, 1752. This was also the opinion of Bishop Kidder: Demonstration of the Messiah, part 2, chap. 3, page 74 and 80, (82) folio edit. 1726, and of many others. Jerom not only says that St. Matthew wrote his Gospel in Hebrew, but seems to say that he had seen a copy of it, but, in some measure, corrupted. Lardner, vol. 5, page 51 and 70. Hody de Text. Origin. Biblior. page 248—9, Oxon. 1705. Dr. Lardner thought that the Hebrew Gospel appeared in the first century, vol. v. page 415, edit. 1788. See Pere Simon.

Many

Many of those who so earnestly contend for the Greek original, in order to avoid the difficulties with which they are pressed by the concurrent evidence of antiquity, suppose that St. Matthew published different editions of his Gospel, in different languages; each of them originals, and of equal authority. Sixtus Senensis, if I am not mistaken, was the first who started this notion. Several writers have since embraced this opinion, especially Dr. Worthington, who hath lately insisted upon it at large, in his Boylean Lectures.

Mr. Stephen Nye *, speaking of the Gospel received by the Ebionites, is of the same opinion. These are his words: “ Not un-
 “ credibly, the Ebionites might follow the
 “ first edition of St. Matthew’s Gospel, or
 “ his Hebrew Gospel, which might begin
 “ at chapter iii. that is, at the baptism of
 “ John. But when Matthew published his
 “ Gospel the second time in Greek, he might
 “ add the genealogy, and the history of the
 “ wise men. The Ebionites, being all Jews,
 “ and understanding only the Hebrew, (the

* See an historical account and defence of the canon of the New Testament, in answer to Amyntor, 1700, page 75, &c.

“ Syro-chaldaic) they adhered to the first
 “ edition, rejecting the other; which also not
 “ being published (it may be) in Judea,
 “ but from some other place, they might
 “ doubt whether it were really St. Matthew’s.
 “ I cannot see,” adds this author, “ what can
 “ be inferred from this to the prejudice of
 “ Christianity, or to the canon of scripture,
 “ except by persons who, having a great
 “ mind to be infidels, please themselves with
 “ trifles*.”

In answer to all such reasonings as these,
 Mr. Whiston, as cited in the dissertation pre-
 fixed, p. 42, justly observes, that a “ double
 “ publication of the same book, is a thing
 “ never heard of, as to any book of either
 “ of the Old Testament or New, *in all anti-*
 “ *quity.*” Surely, in all the disputes which
 the Fathers had with one another, they could

* This author acknowledges that the Hebrew copy
 was the genuine work of St. Matthew, and began at the
 third chapter. This the Jewish Christians were certain
 of; but they might very much question whether the se-
 cond or Greek edition was his or not; especially, if it
 was published abroad. In that case, indeed, they would
 have strong objections to its authenticity, on account of
 the genealogy, which they must have found not easily
 reconcileable with the Old-Testament history.

not

not have omitted to take some notice of such a thing, had it been a fact, or even suspected. This notion, indeed, is a modern thought, started to remove certain difficulties with which men were pressed by the united testimony of antiquity in favour of a Hebrew Gospel by St. Matthew. Besides, if Dr. Worthington's supposition were true, it would not be easy to determine which of the copies could be depended on, in case there were any differences between them.

S E C T. V.

That St. Matthew published his Gospel in Syro-chaldaic, proved from the united Testimony of the Ancients.

IT is granted, by all parties, in this debate, that there was a Hebrew or Syro-chaldaic Gospel ascribed to St. Matthew, in very early times; but we are told that this was the Nazarene or Ebionite Gospel, translated out of the Greek. However this hath never been proved. The evidence which now lies before us, says, that it was the original. It seems to have been used by the primitive *Jewish* Christians,

who in the New Testament, are called Nazarenes, about the year 60 of Christ or sooner, If *they* made use of it, we must have very strong proofs, indeed, that it was not the original. But as the question, whether St. Matthew's Gospel was written in Hebrew or in Greek, is of considerable importance in the enquiry before us, we shall particularly examine the testimony of the fathers concerning it.

The first is Papias, Bishop of Hierapolis in Phrygia, not very distant from Palestine, who flourished about the beginning of the second century; probably between the years of Christ 115 and 120 *. He expressly says, that Matthew wrote his Gospel in Hebrew †. He published a work in five books, called, "an explication of the oracles of the Lord"; but there is nothing of his now extant, except a few fragments, preserved by Irenæus and Eusebius. There are in Eusebius two contradictory accounts of Papias. He is first called, ἀνὴρ τα πάντα ὅτι μαλίστα λογιώτατος καὶ τῆς γραφῆς εἰδημὼν ‡

* Dr. Lardner places him in 116, edit. 1788, vol. 2, page 106.

† Ματθαῖος μὲν οὐν Ἑβραϊδὶ διαλέκτῳ τὰ λόγια συνεγράψατο ἡρμηνεύσει δ' αὐτὰ ὡς ἡδυνάτο ἕκαστος.

Euseb. Hist. Eccles. lib. iii. cap. 39, cantab. 1720.

‡ Euseb. Eccles. Hist. Lib. iii. ch. 36.

A very

A very eloquent man, and skilful in the scriptures. And afterwards, he is called, σφοδρα γαρ τοι σμικρος ων του νοου *. *A man of very little capacity.* The first is supposed by Valesius, to be an interpolation of some unskilful scholiast; and that may be the truth. However, he was a diligent, though, perhaps, not always a judicious collector of our Lord's sayings. Eusebius relates that he wrote several fabulous accounts, and strange parables, of our Saviour, which he learned by tradition: among others, that Christ would, after the general resurrection, reign a thousand years upon earth. "And I judge, says Eusebius, that he had
 " this opinion from his misapprehending the
 " apostolical discourses, in that he did not see
 " through those things which they spoke mystically, and in figures: and, adds he, for he
 " was a man of no great capacity, as may be
 " conjectured from his writings." Papias, we find, is condemned for understanding his New Testament in a literal sense, contrary to the manner and sentiments of later Christians in the days of Eusebius. He was called a man of no great capacity, for not explaining Scripture in an allegorical and mystical manner;

* Euseb. Eccles. Hist. Lib. iii. ch. 39.

which,

which, by the way, is not to his discredit. It had been much better for Christianity had all the Fathers imitated Papias in this respect. The Millennium was a doctrine disapproved of, and to which, it would seem, Eusebius particularly referred. However, few who now read the book of revelation, and receive it into the canon, will think his belief of it a proof of weakness: And he was not singular in that opinion, for the Heretics Cerinthus, and Montanus, and the orthodox Irenæus, Tertullian, Commodian, Lactantius, and Victorinus, held the same. Lardner, vol. 4, page 60, 1788.

Irenæus hath some fragments of Papias, containing stories which are too fabulous to be believed; but if credulity be the fault for which this ancient Father is to be condemned, neither Irenæus, nor Eusebius can be acquitted, as may be seen in their writings*.

But granting that Papias was a weak and credulous man, that by no means disqualifies him for reporting an ordinary and well-known tradition†. According to Eusebius, he expressly says,

* See Euseb. Eccles. Hist. Lib. vii. ch. 17, 18, 19, &c.

† “ A weak man, indeed, if honest, may attest common events as credibly as *the wisest*; yet can hardly make any report that is credible, of such as are miraculous;

says, that St. Matthew wrote his Gospel in Hebrew. It is probable that Irenæus may be right when he says that Papias was an auditor of the apostle John, and the companion of Polycarp. If the tradition be true which places the death of John about the year of Christ 100, it is most likely that Papias had some personal knowledge of him. However, Eusebius says, that he was not the auditor of John, but that he learned several things which he related, from persons well known to the apostles; from Polycarp, perhaps, and others.

Now, the testimony of this ancient writer must be very important with regard to such a plain matter of fact. Surely one who lived in so early an age, could not be ignorant of the language in which a Gospel was originally written. Nor can a probable reason be assigned, why any person should attempt to impose upon Papias. Had the fact which he relates depended upon a train of reasoning, the supposed weakness of his understanding might

“ culous: because a suspicion will always occur, that
 “ his weakness and imperfect knowledge of the extent
 “ of human art, had been imposed upon by the craft of
 “ cunning jugglers.” Middleton’s free Enquiry, 1749,
 page 217, 3d edit.

justly

justly discredit his evidence; but as the case is, it does not affect it at all. He honestly tells us that this was the information he received, and we have no reason to doubt the truth of it, as it was given him by those who were acquainted with the fact: nay, probably, by those who had seen the original Hebrew copy; for Mathew's Gospel, according to the opinion of the most judicious critics, had not then been published above 50 years, if quite so long.

From the whole we see, that Papias acknowledged a Hebrew Gospel, as the original work of St. Matthew; and granting that it was, in his time, translated into Greek, it will not follow from thence, that the Hebrew copy was not the original, and no longer of authority.

The next writer, that ought to be considered, is Tatian, who flourished in the second century, about the year of Christ 172. He was an Assyrian by birth, and was more distinguished by the ancients, for his great genius, learning, and the excessive austerity of his life and manners, than for any remarkable errors or opinions. He seems to have been an enthusiast, though otherwise a pious and good man. In the former part of his life, he made
a great

a great figure as a teacher of oratory; and was originally a heathen, but was converted to Christianity by reading the books of the Old Testament, and by reflecting on the absurdities of Gentilism. He was the disciple, and a great admirer of Justin Martyr, who died about the year 164. His very adversaries allow that he was a great ornament to the church while Justin lived; but they say that afterwards he fell into heresy; that is, he happened to differ from certain of the Fathers, in some particular points. He wrote several books, but it is a matter of doubt whether more than one be now extant; a very valuable performance, intitled, “ a Treatise against the Gentiles,” to be found at the end of Justin Martyr’s works, edit. Paris, 1636.

Eusebius †, towards the beginning of the fourth, and Theodoret, in the beginning of the fifth century, say, that Tatian made a harmony, or collection of the Gospels, called *δια τεσσαρων*, that is, “ of the four.” It is generally thought that this work is now lost ‡,

† Eccles. Hist. lib. iv. ch. 29.

‡ Zachary of Chrysopolis, a writer of the 12th century, says that Tatian’s Harmony is lost. Zacha. ap. Bib. Patr. Tom. xix. page 742. A. Lardner, edition 1788, vol. ii. page 418.

because

because Theodoret says that Tatian's original wanted the Genealogies. There are two Latin harmonies of the Gospels now extant, which, by some writers, are attributed to Tatian and Ammonius; but they are generally reckoned spurious. Dr. Mill, and Jo. James Wetstein, suppose that they are the work of some later Christian, of perhaps the fifth century. Valesius and others are of the same opinion. Dr. Lardner is inclined to think, that the lesser of the two may be Tatian's, but that it is corrupted *. The genealogies are wanting in it, but it alludes to some parts of the history contained in the first and second chapters of St. Matthew. However, this is no certain proof that these chapters are the work of St. Matthew, because, granting this lesser harmony to be Tatian's, yet its warmest advocates allow that it is much corrupted.

It is generally acknowledged by those who earnestly contend for the Greek original of St. Matthew's Gospel, that Tatian made use of the Hebrew copy in compiling his Harmony, and that he thought it to be genuine, and the most authentic; but this opinion of his is

* Lardner's Credib. part. ii. vol. iii. ch. 36, edition 1788, vol. ii. page 422.

considered

considered as a mistake *. But who can believe that a disciple and friend of Justin Martyr, about 60 and 70 years after the death of the Apostle John, should not know whether the Greek or Hebrew copy of St. Matthew, was generally received by the church? Tatian's using the Hebrew copy not only proves that there was a Gospel by St. Matthew then universally received; but seems likewise to shew that the Hebrew copy of it was considered as of chief authority.

This, however, is not all: we have yet a stronger proof of the truth and fidelity of Tatian's harmony; for Ephrem the Syrian, an orthodox writer of the fourth century, wrote commentaries on it †.

This work of Ephrem affords a very considerable argument to prove, that Tatian's harmony was not so contemptible and heretical a performance as some have thought. It is said that, in the latter part of his life, Tatian

* Jones's new and full method of settling the canonical authority of the New Testament, vol. 1, page 492, and vol. 3, pages 6, 7.

† Lardner's Credib. p. 2, vol. 1, artic. Tatian, edit. 1788, vol. 2, p. 138, and vol. 3, ch. 36, edit. 1788. See also, vol. 2, p. 416—20, where it is said, that Zachary, of Chrysopolis, wrote a comment upon it.

became

became a Valentinian; and if he did, his testimony to a Syro-chaldaic Gospel by St. Matthew, is no way affected; however, he was not so, when he drew up this performance; (if the lesser harmony, now extant, be, in any measure, the work of Tatian,) for he allows three years to our Saviour's public ministry, whereas the Valentinians allowed only one. It is not unlikely, therefore, that this book was composed by Tatian, before the death of Justin Martyr; before he fell into any Heresy, and while, it is granted, that he was an ornament to the church.

It ought to be observed, that Theodoret, who flourished towards the beginning of the fifth century, in what he says of this work of Tatian's, does not absolutely condemn it. He says, that "Tatian composed a Gospel called
 " *δια τεσσαρων*, of the four, leaving out the genealogies, and *every thing which shewed Jesus to be the son of David according to the flesh*: and that it was, not only used by those of his own sect, but also, by them who followed the apostolical doctrine; they not perceiving, adds he, the fraud of the composition, but simply using it as a compendious book." We cannot understand these words of Theodoret in the strictest sense; for if
 every

every thing which shewed Jesus to be the son of David according to the flesh, was left out by Tatian, it will be very difficult to conceive that the catholic Christians made use of his book; and it will still be more difficult to believe that Ephrem should write commentaries on it. In that case, he would rather have published a confutation of it, as an heretical and dangerous work.

Again, Theodoret says, “ I have also met
 “ with above two hundred of these books,
 “ which were in esteem in our churches, all
 “ which I took away, and laid aside *, in a
 “ parcel, and placed in their room the Gos-
 “ pels of the four Evangelists.” This cer-
 tainly was doing right; for let Tatian’s har-
 mony have been ever so good, it was proper in
 Theodoret to take care that it did not supply
 the place of the four Gospels †.

But there is a heavy charge brought against
 Tatian by Eusebius: he had the assurance to

* Others, most probably, did the same, which will
 very naturally account for Tatian’s genuine works be-
 ing soon lost. But if this harmony was a dangerous
 work, one might rather expect that the whole two
 hundred would have been committed to the flames.

† Lardner’s Credib, p. ii. vol. 3, ch. 36, edit. 1788,
 vol. 2, page 420.

alter, or explain some words of the apostle, (Paul's) as pretending to correct the order and composition of his stile. When we recollect that Tatian was, by profession, a teacher of oratory, we shall be ready to think, with Dr. Mill, " that he had no ill design in what he did; that his altering the words of St. Paul amounted to no more than some interlineary or marginal explications; putting, here and there, over against the apostle's, other synonymous words, which were somewhat clearer. His correcting the apostle's stile, likewise, says Dr. Mill, was only disposing, in the margin, some of St. Paul's words, in a more natural order *, without intending, or, in the event, doing any prejudice to the apostle's original text." This seems to be a natural and rational account of the matter; because, the corrections said to be made by Tatian, were only what might be expected from a grammarian and a rhetorician.

Upon the whole, it appears that, in the opinion of Tatian, St. Matthew published his Gospel in Hebrew; and, which is more, that he did not insert the genealogy. The testi-

* If these corrections and alterations of Tatian's were now in being, they would perhaps be of service.

mony of this writer is equal to any of his contemporaries, because it is most natural to suppose, that when he undertook to compile his harmony, he would not use any copies of the Gospels but what were known to be authentic.

The next writer who speaks of this matter is Hegesippus, who flourished in the second century, about the year of Christ, 173. He was a Jewish convert to Christianity, and wrote several books, “ which, according to Eusebius, “ contained, in a plain stile, a faithful relation “ of the apostolic preaching.” But his works are now all lost, except some fragments preserved by Eusebius, and one by Photius.

Hegesippus bears testimony to a Hebrew Gospel by St. Matthew; for Eusebius *, speaking of this Father, says, “ that he, also, takes “ some things out of the Gospel according to “ the Hebrews, and out of the Syriac, and, in “ particular, out of the Hebrew tongue; manifesting thereby, that he is one of the faithful “ from among the Hebrews.” Dr. Lardner thinks that this obscure passage has been well explained, though undesignedly, by Jerom,

* Eccles. Hist. lib. iv. cap. 22.

when he says, " In the Gospel according to the
 " Hebrews, which is written indeed, in the Sy-
 " riac and Chaldaic tongue (or Syro-Chaldaic
 " tongue) but in Hebrew characters, is this
 " history *:" which History he then relates.
 Whatever obscurity there may be in this pas-
 sage of Eusebius, it clearly proves that there
 was a Hebrew Gospel in the days of Hegesip-
 pus, and that he made use of it as authentic.

Some moderns suppose that he was a Naza-
 rene Christian: but there is no foundation for
 the opinion, and if he was, it would not affect
 his testimony. However, he is not called a
 Nazarene Christian by any of the ancients;
 and Eusebius, in particular, seems to have had
 a good opinion of him. It is difficult to con-
 ceive what should induce Basnage, Dupin,
 and Lamp, to think slightly of Hegesippus †.

The passage in which Hegesippus is thought
 to allude to the second chapter of St. Matthew's
 Gospel, will be considered hereafter.

Irenæus who flourished in the second cen-

* Lardner's Credib. p. ii. vol. i. art. Hegesippus.
 Edition 1788, vol. ii. page 144.

† Lardner's Credib. vol. i. part ii: page 315, note b.
 Edition 1788, vol. ii. page 141—2, note B.

tury, about the year 178, says, " that Matthew, " among the Jews, wrote a Gospel in their " own language, while Peter and Paul were " preaching at Rome, and founding a church " there *."

Pantæus, a Christian writer of the second century, about the year 192, bears the strongest testimony to St. Mathew's Hebrew Gospel. Eusebius says that Pantæus journeyed as far as India †; and that he found there the Gospel according to St. Matthew, which Bartholomew, one of the twelve apostles, having preached there, had left behind him, to establish the new made converts in the faith, and that it was written in Hebrew ‡. To this account, given by Eusebius, Jerom adds, that Pantæus

* Advers. Hær. Lib. iii. chap. i. See also Euseb. Eccles. Hist. lib. v. cap. 8, and Lardner's Credib. p. ii. vol. i. art. Irenæus. Edition 1788, vol. ii. page 158. See the dissertation.

† Mosheim thinks, that this was Arabia the happy, (this was the opinion of Justin Martyr, Dial. cum Tryph. page 304, Colon. ed.) because some Jews did live there. This very naturally accounts for what follows in Eusebius and Jerom, concerning the Hebrew Gospel found there by Pantæus. Comment. de rebus christianorum, page 206, note. See also his Eccles. Hist. vol. i. page 72.

‡ Euseb. Eccles. Hist. lib. v. cap. 10.

brought this Gospel back with him to Alexandria, written in Hebrew letters *.

Dr. Lardner seems to give but little credit to this story, though it is clearly asserted by two writers, upon whose authority, in other matters, the Dr. greatly depends. There is nothing, that I can see, in the story itself, which renders it altogether incredible. Mr. Jones allows it to be true, but thinks that this Hebrew Gospel was a translation from the Greek †. There is, however, no ground for this supposition. Some stronger reasons, than any yet produced, must be brought before the story is proved to be absolutely incredible.

If this be a fact, it seems to be a full and direct proof, that there was a Hebrew copy of St. Matthew's Gospel, deemed authentic by an apostle: if it had not been so reckoned, St. Bartholomew would not have left it behind him.

Origen, also, in the beginning of the third century, about the year 230, says, " that

* Jerom in Catalog. No. 46. See also Ruffinus. Epiphanius says, that a Jew named Joseph found in a cell at Tiberias the Hebrew Gospel ascribed to St. Matthew. Hær. 30. Ebion. No. 6. Mosheim de Reb. Christ. page 207.

† Jones on the Canon, vol. iii. page 55.

“ Matthew, formerly a publican, afterwards
 “ an apostle, published a Gospel in Hebrew,
 “ for the sake of the Jews who believed *.

Eusebius, about the year 315, says, “ that
 “ St. Matthew, having preached first to the
 “ Hebrews, and being about going to other
 “ nations, did, in his own country language,
 “ pen the Gospel according to him; supplying,
 “ by writing, the want of his presence and
 “ converse among them, whom he was now
 “ about to leave †.”

To add no more, Jerom, about the year
 400, confirms this general notion of the lan-
 guage in which St. Matthew published his
 Gospel.

“ Matthew, says he, also called Levi, who
 “ became from a publican an apostle, was the
 “ *first* who composed a Gospel of Christ, and
 “ for the sake of those who believed in Christ,
 “ among the Jews, wrote it in the Hebrew
 “ language and letters: but it is uncertain

* Comment. in Matth. vol. i. page 203. Rothomag.
 1668. See also, Euseb. Eccles. Hist. lib. vi. cap. 25.
 It is said by Jerom that Origen used the Hebrew Gospel
 frequently. Jerom. Cat. James, No. 3. Lardner, edit.
 1788, vol. ii. page 566. See also, page 541, &c. and
 the Dissertation.

† Euseb. Eccles. Hist. lib. iii. cap. 24.

“ who translated it into Greek. Moreover,
 “ the Hebrew copy, *itself*, is, to this time,
 “ preserved in the library of Cesarea, which
 “ Pamphilus the Martyr, with much diligence,
 “ collected. The Nazarenes, who live in
 “ Bærea, a city of Syria, granted me the favor
 “ of writing it out; in which Gospel there
 “ is this observable, that wherever the Evan-
 “ gelist himself cites, or introduces our Saviour
 “ as citing any passage out of the Old Testa-
 “ ment, he does not follow the translation of
 “ the seventy, but the Hebrew copies, of
 “ which there are these two instances, “ out
 “ of Egypt have I called my son,” and “ he
 “ shall be called a Nazarene*.”

In another place, he says; “ In the Gospel
 “ according to the Hebrews, which is writ-
 “ ten in the Chaldee and Syriac Language,
 “ which the Nazarenes use, [and is] that ac-
 “ cording to the twelve apostles, or, as *most*
 “ *think*, according to Matthew †.”

* Jerom in Catalog. No. 4. See Jones on the Ca-
 non, vol. i. page 342, &c. and also Grab. Spiceleg. patr.
 sæc. prim. Oxon. 1698, page 23, &c. See the Differ-
 tation, p. 1, &c. See page 52, note b.

† Vol. iii. cont. Pelag. Hæref. page 99, Paris 1546.
 See also Jones, vol. i. page 344.

Again,

Again, “ in the Gospel which the Nazarenes and Ebionites use, which I lately translated out of Hebrew into Greek, and which is by most esteemed the authentic Gospel of Matthew *.”

From these passages in Jerom, we learn that there was, in his time, a Hebrew Gospel by him thought genuine and authentic; and that it was translated into Greek before he undertook to do it. However, there is reason to believe, that the Gospel which Jerom translated, was not the *original* Gospel of the Nazarenes. Perhaps it was the Ebionite Gospel mentioned by Epiphanius; (see page 50) for it contained chapters which the Nazarene Gospel doth not seem to have ever had.

Thus we have considered the testimonies of several Orthodox Fathers, and of some others who were suspected of heresy; and we find that they all agree in affirming that St. Matthew wrote his Gospel in Hebrew, for the use of the believing Jews. And is not this what might naturally be expected? for how com-

* Lib. ii. comment. in Matth. cap. xii. 13. Jones, vol. i. p. 347. See also Father Simon's Crit. Hist. of the text of the New Testament, chap. iii. v, ix. See the Dissertation.

mon soever the use of the Greek language might be, yet there doubtless were many in Palæstine unacquainted with it. The same reasons, therefore, that induced our Saviour to preach in the Syro-chaldaic tongue (which was never questioned that I know of,) might, also, induce, at least, one of his disciples, to publish a gospel in the same language, namely, to instruct and establish the poor and ignorant Jews who believed. One authentic Gospel was sufficient to answer that purpose; but as the whole race of man were immediately concerned in the contents of the New Testament; the other parts of it, (the Epistle to the Hebrews, perhaps, excepted,) were published in a Language more universally known. Had authors duly attended to this consideration, they would hardly have said, that no reason could be assigned, why St. Matthew, more than any other Evangelist, should publish a Gospel in Hebrew*.

As it appears, then, most probable that St. Matthew wrote for the use of the Jews in

* "I cannot conceive the reason, why Matthew should write in Hebrew, any more than any of the other Evangelists." Lardner's Supplement to Credib. vol. i. page 126, edition 1788, vol. vi. page 64.

Palæstine, in their own Language, where should we expect to find his genuine Gospel but among them *? That this Gospel was in considerable esteem, appears from the testimony of some ancient Fathers. Ignatius seems to quote a passage from the Gospel to the Hebrews, which was the same, or very nearly the same, with that of the Nazarenes †; and Justin Martyr plainly cites it. “ And then,” says he, “ when Jesus came to the river Jordan, where John was baptizing, as Jesus descended into the water, a fire also was kindled in Jordan. &c. ‡” This particular is mentioned in the Nazarene Gospel, though not exactly in the same words; but there is

* One considerable argument in favor of the Nazarene Gospel may be drawn from its reading in Matth. xxiii. 35. Zechariah the son of Jehoiada, which seems to be the truth, see 2 Chron. xxiv. 17, &c. “ In Evangelio quo untuntur Nazareni, pro filio Barachizæ, filium Joadæ reperimus scriptum.” Jerom. Comment. in loco. Dr. Lardner, edition 1788, vol. i. page 404—5. The doctor was of opinion, that “ the son of Barachias” is an interpolation. Ubi supra.

† Ignat. Epist. ad Smyrnæos. sect. 3. See Jerom. de Vir. illust. in Ignat. Grab. Spiceleg. Patr. sæc. prim. vol. i. page 25.

‡ Dialog. cum Trypho. par. ii. 315. Thirlby's edit. London, 1722. See the Dissertation.

nothing

nothing like it, in either of the four Gospels, as we now have them. It would *hence* seem, that these ancient fathers not only held the Nazarene Gospel in esteem, but regarded it as the original work of St. Matthew.

But it is said, that the Gospel of the Nazarenes, according to the best judgment that can be formed from the fragments of it now extant, was unworthy of an apostle, because it contained many childish and trifling things. This must be allowed to be true with regard to some parts of it now remaining; but there is reason to believe, that these were not to be met with in the original copy. (See page 50.) There is little doubt but that it was very soon adulterated; for when the Nazarenes broke off communion with the other Christians in the days of Adrian, these latter took very little notice of the Hebrew copy, which few of them understood; and it might be corrupted without their knowing any thing of the matter. See the Dissertation. The late learned Dr. Wall's sentiment on this head seems very reasonable. " St. Matthew," says he, " having wrote his Gospel in Hebrew for the use of the Jewish Christians, no other Christian could read it in the original but they; and they having
" been

“ been soon dispersed, and flying from Jeru-
 “ salem to Pella and other eastern parts, and
 “ dividing themselves quickly into several sects,
 “ (all which sects are now long ago extin-
 “ guished) so it is that the Hebrew copy was
 “ utterly lost; and we have nothing of St.
 “ Matthew but a translation made first in
 “ Greek, and afterwards out of that into
 “ Latin, and several other languages *.”

S E C T. VI.

*Objections to the Testimony of the ancient Here-
 tics, considered. Two passages in Epiphanius
 explained. St. Luke's Gospel seems to have
 been the first published.*

BUT it may be objected, that the evi-
 dence of the Nazarenes, Ebionites, of
 Tatian, &c. cannot be depended upon, because

* Wall's critical notes on the beginning of St. Mat-
 thew. “ Certe Nazareni illi genuina erant progenies
 “ eorum, qui primi in Palæstina Christi fidem erant am-
 “ plexi.” Grot. in Init. Matth. See, also, Father
 Simon's Crit. Hist. of the text of the New Test. ch. 7.
 This was the opinion, likewise, of Sam. Basnage, Pet.
 Dan. Huet, L'Enfant, and Beaufobre. Mosheim in-
 quisitio in historiam Nazaræorum, page 137, &c.

they

they were not catholic Christians, but commonly reputed Heretics.

I answer, that this circumstance, though it may invalidate their testimony where their particular sentiments are immediately concerned, cannot hinder their being reckoned very credible and sufficient evidences in other points. For instance, they are always looked upon, and produced, as unquestionable witnesses, that such men as Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, really existed, and that they wrote the Gospels which now go by their names. Errors in opinion cannot, in reason, be supposed to destroy the evidence of facts, wherein such opinions are not any way concerned. Tertullian, in the latter part of his life was a Montanist *; yet his testimony, in every thing that did not concern Montanism, was never called in question, excepting by Jerom and Cyprian: neither was there any just reason why

* He was the most considerable man of that illiterate sect. It would seem that he died under a sentence of excommunication on account of his Montanism: and this is probably the reason why he is not placed in the list of saints, where many of much worse characters are now found. See Daillé on the right use of the Fathers, part 2, page 69.

they should reject it, but what would, in several points, equally affect their own.

Mr. Whiston, enumerating the helps we now have to restore the true text of the Old Testament, says, "all the citations from the
" Greek version, made in the New Testament,
" in the apostolical constitutions, in all the
" most primitive Fathers, and even *by any of*
" *the old Heretics themselves*, before, or not
" long after, the days of Origen, &c. will be of
" very great use, &c." * This observation, in part, is applicable, also, to the books of the

* Essay towards restoring the true text of the Old Testament, London, 1722, page 332. Mr. Whiston, it is granted, was a person upon whose judgment, in many points, we cannot rely. However, he was a man of great genius and learning, and, above all, of the strictest fidelity and honesty. He hath, indeed, been much injured by the low esteem in which his writings have been held. There are as many original and judicious thoughts and observations scattered up and down in his works, as in most modern writers; many more than we find in the compositions of some celebrated authors, who, while they are much obliged to, and borrow from him, affect to treat him with something like contempt. At the same time, it is undeniably true that he was beyond measure fanciful, and advanced several strange paradoxes. There are, however, many of his works which, with all their faults, are well worthy of a careful perusal; among others, the performance referred to in the beginning of this note.

New Testament ; for certainly we have a right to avail ourselves of the testimony of Heretics, when they inform us of any thing material which relates to our common christianity.

The peculiar sentiments of the Nazarenes, Ebionites, Cerinthians, and Carpocratians, who seem to have used the Hebrew Gospel of St. Matthew, have already been, in part, enumerated. (See page 26, &c.) But no reason appears why they should be suspected of erasing these two chapters from their copy, excepting one ; which is, that Christ is said to be born of a virgin, contrary to the sentiments of some among them. The Carpocratians, especially, had more and stronger reasons to reject the 5th, 6th, 7th, 15th, 19th, and 23d chapters, than the two first ; because these chapters expressly condemn the licentious and impious principles which are commonly ascribed to those Heretics. If it should be thought that any of the sects just mentioned were pressed with a difficulty, by the account given of the birth of Christ, and that, therefore, they found it necessary to reject these chapters ; it may be replied, that supposing they were ever so strongly inclined, it is by no means probable that they should, or, indeed, possibly that they could erase them without being discovered.

The

The Nazarenes (for whose especial use St. Matthew's Gospel seems to have been composed) and part of the Ebionites, could have no particular objection to these chapters, because they believed Jesus to be born of a virgin. (See page 32, &c.) It is not credible, therefore, that Cerinthus, Carpocrates, and the rest of the Ebionites, would dare attempt to alter this Gospel which was received by others of their own brethren. If they had attempted such a thing, it could hardly have failed of creating new divisions among them, of which we have not the least footsteps in all antiquity. When we consider that some who used this Hebrew Gospel had no temptation to alter it, we shall be ready to believe, that others, however strong their inclinations, could not do it.

But the reason, which is usually assigned for the Cerinthians, &c. attempting to erase these chapters, is not sufficient to support the charge, because they might find means to get over the difficulty without it. Cerinthus actually did argue, from the genealogy in Matthew, that Jesus was only a man, the son of Joseph and Mary*: whence it appears that

G

he

* This circumstance is, at least, a presumptive proof
that

he did not consider these chapters as altogether unfavourable to his peculiar opinions.

The passages upon which the supposition is founded that these chapters were erased by these Heretics are in Epiphanius; Εχουσι δε τα κατα Ματθαιον Ευαγγελιον πληρεστατον Εβραϊστι παρ' αυτοις, γαρ σαφως τουτο, καθως εξ αρχης εγραφη Εβραικοις γραμμασις επι σωζεται. Ουκ οίδα δε ει και τας γενεαλογιας τας απο του Αβρααμ αχρι Χριστου περιειλον. "They" (i. e. the Nazarenes) "have the Gospel of Matthew, *most entire*, in the Hebrew language among them; for this certainly is preserved among them, *as it was at first*, in Hebrew characters. But I know not whether they have taken away the genealogy from Abraham to Christ*." But of the Ebionite Gospel he says, Εν τω γουν παρ' αυτοις Ευαγγελιω κατα Ματθαιον ονομαζομενω, ουχ'ολω δε πληρεστατω, αλλα νενοθευμετω, και ηκρωτηριασμενω, Εβραικον δε τουτο καλουσιν. Igitur in eo quod penes illos est Matthei Evangelio, quanquam ne integrum quidem illud habent, sed adultera-

that Cerinthus lived later than is usually thought, some time in the second century, between the years 117 and 161: for it doth not appear that these chapters were inserted, at least they are not clearly and unquestionably referred to till that period. Mosheim de rebus Christ. page 196, &c. See page 36.

* Epiphanius, Hæres. 29 Nazar. Sect. 9, apud finem.

tum

tum ac mutilum, idque ipsum Hebraicum vocant *. And in another place Epiphanius says, Οἱοὶ δὲ ἀλλὰ τίνα διανοοῦναι παρακοφάνεις γὰρ τὰς παρὰ τῷ Ματθαίῳ γενεαλογίας. “ But they” (the Ebionites) “ think otherwise, for they have taken away “ the genealogy from Matthew †.” We have already observed, that Epiphanius was a native of Palæstine, and understood the Hebrew or Syro-chaldaic tongue. (See page 47

* Epiphanius Hæros. 30, Ebion. sect. 13, page 137. Paris edit. See also Hæres. 30, sect. 3, page 127. Καὶ δέχονται μὲν καὶ αὐτοὶ τὸν κατὰ Ματθαίον Εὐαγγέλιον τοῦτο γὰρ καὶ αὐτοὶ ὡς καὶ οἱ κατὰ Κληρίθου χρῶνται μόνῳ. Καλοῦσι δὲ αὐτὸ κατὰ Εβραίους, ὡς τὰ ἀληθὴ ἐστὶν εἰπεῖν, ὅτι Ματθαῖος μόνος Εβραῖστί καὶ Εβραίοις γραμμάσιν ἐν τῇ καινῇ Διαθήκῃ ἐποίησατο τὴν τοῦ Εὐαγγελίου ἐκθεσιν τε καὶ κηρυγμῶν. Atque Evangelium illi quidem secundum Matthæum admittunt, quo solo Cerinthianorum instar utuntur, idque ipsum secundum Hebræos appellant. Etenim vere illud affirmare possumus, unum ex omnibus Novi Testamenti scriptoribus Matthæum hebraice, ac literis hebraicis evangelicam historiam texisse.

It is observable that Epiphanius, in the above passage, says, that the Ebionite Gospel, was Οὐχ' ὅλῳ πληρῶσαι, “ not wholly perfect ;” which may be thought to imply, that it was not very corrupt, though it certainly was in some respects.

† Ibid. Hæres. 30, section 14. Ebion. page 138. They not only took away the genealogy, but also the first and second chapters, as Epiphanius immediately adds.

note.) It is not credible, therefore, that he was unacquainted with the Nazarene Gospel *. Besides, with what propriety could he say that it was πληρεσίων, *most entire*, if he suspected that any genuine part of it was taken away? For these reasons, I apprehend, that Epiphanius, in the first passage, intended to say, that he did not know whether the genealogy was a genuine part of St. Matthew's Gospel or not; whether it was the composition of the apostle, or inserted by some other hand afterwards. The former part of the paragraph would scarcely be consistent with the latter, if we understood it in any other sense.

It is generally believed that the Gospel received by both the Nazarenes and the Ebionites was, upon the whole, the same. It did not differ in any very material point; and, therefore, what is said of the one, may be applied to the other. The connection of the first passage, above cited, from Epiphanius, may induce one to think that the meaning I have given the closing sentence is just. As the author is speaking, in the second passage, of very nearly the same Gospel, I am inclined

* It is hardly credible that Epiphanius had not seen the Nazarene Gospel, as he was a native of Palæstine.

to understand him, as meaning the same thing, though in less guarded expressions; that he was not certain whether the genealogy was a genuine part of St. Matthew's Gospel or not. When the age of Epiphanius, (above 300 years after the publication of St. Matthew's Gospel) his knowledge of the subject, the nature of the question, and the extent of his understanding, are considered, the sense above given appears the most probable.

There was another way by which Cerinthus, &c. might get clear of this difficulty, without expunging two whole chapters. They might have rejected St. Matthew's Gospel altogether, and acknowledged St. Mark's as alone authentic*. This, certainly, might have been done by Cerinthus and Carpocrates; for they were both men of learning, educated at Alexandria, of which place the latter was a native, and, consequently, both understood the Greek language, in which St. Mark composed his Gospel.

As the three first Gospels were published long before the days of either of these men, they had their choice which to fix upon; and as St. Mark's said nothing of Jesus till his bap-

* See below.

tism, it is natural to think that they rather would have acknowledged that to be genuine, than have laid themselves under a necessity of cutting off, from St. Matthew, two chapters which were commonly received as authentic.

Had St. Matthew's Gospel been known long before either of the others, it may be supposed that its established reputation might lead these heretics to use it; but that is by no means probable: for though we are not quite certain which of the three was first published, yet we have the strongest reasons to believe that all the three made their appearance nearly together.

Dr. Lardner thinks that St. Luke was the first who published a Gospel *, about the years

63

* If St. Matthew was the first evangelist, and was the author of the first and second chapters, it is scarcely credible, that St. Luke should take no notice of some remarkable events related in them, when writing on the same subject. This omission seems to imply that St. Luke wrote before St. Matthew.

As it is most probable that St. Matthew's Gospel was translated into Greek in some foreign country upwards of sixty years after the birth of Christ, and perhaps, several years more after its publication; it may, not unreasonably, be imagined, that the translator might add,
without

63 or 64 of Christ, and that St. Matthew and St. Mark wrote much about the same time, that is, 64 *.

The introduction to St. Luke's Gospel seems to intimate that his was the first published of the four which we now have. "Forasmuch as many have taken in hand to set forth in order a declaration of those things, &c." Had there been any such authentic accounts of Jesus before published as had been universally received by the churches, he would not have said, that such a thing *had been taken*

without a bad design, and without detection, some particulars, such as the visit of the Magi, the flight into Egypt, and the slaughter of the infants. At so distant a period, the poor Jewish Christians in Palæstine might be quite ignorant of former times and transactions; and their brethren abroad, having no acquaintance with affairs in Judea so many years before, would take this account as the authentic writing of St. Matthew. Intelligence of facts and events was not *then* so easily conveyed, as it is in modern times. Reports of facts, at a great distance of time, might prevail; so that the translator, though deceived himself, might have no design to deceive others. See Macknight's 6th preliminary observation, prefixed to his Harmony of the Gospels.

* Supplement to the Credib. vol. i. page 80, &c. Edition 1788, vol. vi. page 41—2. These three supplemental volumes ought to be carefully perused by every Christian.

in hand, or *attempted*. He would not have said this of St. Matthew and St. Mark, nor could they be the *many* whose works he speaks of, rather in a disparaging manner. It is, therefore, most probable that he meant some imperfect traditions committed to writing, which he corrected and perfected by his Gospel *.

There are others † who think that St. Matthew wrote in the year 38; but there are some passages in St. Matthew which appear, rather, inconsistent with that sentiment ‡.

In short, it is the opinion of the most judicious critics, that the three first Gospels were published much about the same time; that

* Id. page 80, &c. Edition 1788, vol. vi. p. 42, &c.

† See Dr. Henry Owen's observations on the four Gospels.

‡ See Matthew xxvii, 8. "Wherefore that field was called the field of blood *unto this day*." And chap. xxviii. 15. "And this saying is commonly reported among the Jews, *until this day*." It is by no means likely that he would have expressed himself after this manner, had he published his Gospel within a few years after the ascension of Christ; but the language was very natural, if he wrote 27 or 28 years afterwards, i. e. in the year 63 or 64 of Christ. See Dr. Lardner, edition 1788, vol. vi. page 59.

is, between the years 62 and 65, and that St. Luke's was the first *.

When these things are duly attended to, it will appear not a little strange, that men who are always represented by their adversaries as very artful and cunning, should chuse to erase out of a Gospel two chapters of acknowledged authenticity, when they might have fixed upon another Gospel, where this was not in the least necessary. By receiving St. Mark, and rejecting St. Matthew altogether, they would have kept clear of the heinous charge now brought against them, of mutilating the

* Jerom, about the year 392, says that in his time, the four Latin Gospels were interpolated: that the common Latin translations were in great disorder: that the copies were different from one another: that several passages of Luke's and Matthew's Gospels were inserted in Mark's, to make it more compleat; and in Matthew's Gospel, many passages of John and Mark; and in like manner of the rest. Many things belonging to one Gospel were inserted in the others. Pref. in iv. Evang. Lardner, vol. v. page 70, and note m. See also vol. iii. page 326, 334. May not the first and second chapters of St. Matthew's Gospel, have been *one* of these interpolations?

Credibile est ad id tempus Matthæi librum, non nisi, Hebræo sermone extitisse. Marcus autem Græcæ compendium magis historiæ, quam historiam scripserat. Grot. Annot. in Luc. cap. i, ver. i.

only

only Gospel which they admitted. Where was their art, when they, unnecessarily, exposed themselves to an accusation of this nature? There is nothing in St. Matthew that is more favourable to their particular sentiments than in St. Mark. Indeed, there are several things, in the former, very strong against the notions said to be entertained by some of them.

If it be supposed that they preferred St. Matthew's Gospel to St. Mark's, because in chap. xiii. 55, Jesus is called, *ὁ τοῦ τεκτόνος υἱός*, "*the son of the carpenter*," agreeably to the notion of those who thought Jesus to be the son of Joseph and Mary, when in Mark, chap. vi, 3, he is called, *ὁ τεκτων*, "*the carpenter*," it may be replied, that the phrases are similar; for it was common, among the eastern nations, to distinguish the son by the profession of the father. We have numerous instances of this kind. But it may be answered farther, that there were several copies of St. Mark, which, in this place, read the same with St. Matthew. Even so late as the days of Origen, there seems to have been no difference, in this point, between the two evangelists; at least, Origen had seen no copies that differed;

differed : for he expressly declares, in answer to Celsus, “ that it is no where said, in the Gospels received by the churches, that Jesus “ himself was a carpenter.” This Origen would scarcely have asserted, had he read in St. Mark as we now do. There are many copies of St. Mark, as appears from Dr. Mill, which read in this place as St. Matthew does. Justin Martyr, it is true, says, that Jesus made ploughs and yokes ; but it is not likely that he alluded to this passage in St. Mark’s Gospel, but to some tradition common in his time *.

These arguments, especially so far as they relate to Cerinthus and Carpocrates, cannot be weakened, unless we suppose that there was a greater distance of time between the publication of St. Matthew’s and St. Mark’s Gospels than can possibly be granted, if any regard is to be paid to the declarations of many ancients, and to the opinions of the best modern critics.

* Mosheim de rebus Christ. prim. Sect. 2. page 63, 1753, note. See also Jones on the Canon, vol. i. page 544, 545.

S E C T. VII.

The first and second Chapters of St. Matthew's Gospel not referred to by the apostolical Fathers, nor by others, for several years after this Gospel was publickly known and acknowledged.

WE have seen above that all the ancients, with one consent, affirm, that the Gospel by St. Matthew was originally published in Hebrew or Syro-chaldaic; and that *some* of them represent the copies of it, as not having the two first chapters. This last circumstance is a strong presumption against their authenticity. We shall now proceed to shew that these chapters were not referred to for a considerable time after St. Matthew's Gospel was publickly known.

It is not certain that they are referred to, by any of those who are usually called the apostolical fathers, though these fathers frequently refer to other parts of this Gospel.

The two first chapters are not referred to by St. Barnabas, about the year of Christ 71,
though

though he cites or alludes to other parts of St. Matthew, eight or nine times; nor by Clement of Rome, about 96, though he alludes to other parts of this Gospel, three or four times; nor by Hermas, about 100, though he seems to allude to St. Matthew eight or nine times; nor by Polycarp *, about 108, though he refers to this Gospel about six times †. As to those fragments of Polycarp which Feuardentius, in his edition of Irenæus, hath published from Victor of Capua, a writer of the 6th century, they can be considered as of little or no weight. It is most probable that they are spurious; because, in the days of Eusebius and of Jerom, there appears to have been nothing remaining of Polycarp's but his epistle to the Philippians ‡.

* Polycarp's writings may be of later date, for he was not put to death at soonest till 148, or perhaps several years later.

† As these Fathers frequently had occasion to speak of the family and birth of Christ, it is hardly credible, that neither of them should have referred to these chapters, had they been extant, and acknowledged to be the composition of St. Matthew.

‡ Jones on the Canon, vol. iii. page 3, 4, and Lardner's Credib. part 2, vol. i. Art. Polycarp. Edition 1788, vol. ii. page 90.

Ignatius,

Ignatius, in his epistle to the Ephesians, section 19, is supposed to allude to the second chapter of St. Matthew, when he says, " that
 " our Lord was manifested to the world by
 " a bright star *." There is nothing, however, so determinate in the language of this passage, as to render it certain that it refers to the history of the Magi, as recorded in the Greek copies of St. Matthew's Gospel. It may possibly be only an allusion to a tradition which prevailed, and which might be the origin of the story, as we now find it in the New Testament. But supposing that these words do refer to the second chapter, still no great stress can be laid upon them; because the epistles of Ignatius, if in any degree genuine, are very much corrupted. Those which are called the larger epistles, are now, generally, rejected by the learned: and it is acknowledged, that the lesser epistles have been tampered with and interpolated †.

Should

* Οσθη εν Ουρανω ελκυμεν. Ignatius. Epist. ad Ephes. page 28. Edit. Isaac. Vossius amstel. 1646.

† Lardner's Credib. part 2, vol. i. Art. Ignatius. Edition 1788, vol. ii. page 68—72. See also Mosheim's Eccles. Hist. vol. i. page 51, 52, and Jones on the Canon, vol. i. page 367. That Ignatius's epistles, are
 spurious,

Should it, after all, be granted that the words of Ignatius are genuine, and that they do certainly allude to the second chapter of St. Matthew's Gospel, it ought still to be remembered, that they were written, at least, fifty years after the publication of that Gospel.

According to some of the best critics *, Ignatius did not write to the Ephesians till about the year 114 or 116, when he was going, under a strong guard, from Syria to Rome, where he was devoured by wild beasts. But there is the less occasion to insist upon this circumstance, as the authenticity of the passage is so very questionable.

spurious, or greatly interpolated, was the opinion of Salmasius, Blondel, and Daille. Le Seur says that Daille has clearly proved, that the first or small collection of Ignatius's epistles was forged towards the beginning of the 4th century. History of Early Opinions concerning Jesus Christ, by Dr. Priestley, vol. 1, page 107, 1786.

* Dupin, Tillemont, and Cave, place the martyrdom of Ignatius, and consequently, the date of his epistle to the Ephesians, in the 10th of Trajan, A. D. 107. But Pearson, Lloyd, Page, Le Clerc, and Fabricius, place it in 116. Dr. Lardner seems inclined to the opinion of the former writers. Lardner's Credib. part ii. vol. i. Art. Ignatius. Edition 1788, vol. ii. page 66.

The two first chapters are not referred to by the author of the epistle to Diognetus, falsely ascribed to Justin Martyr, and which was written about 140; nor by Athenagoras, about 178; nor by Theophilus of Antioch, about 181; though each of them refers to other parts of St. Matthew's Gospel *.

The next allusion, after that of Ignatius, which is supposed to be made to these chapters, is in the Sibylline oracles; which were the forgery of some Christian or Christians, between the years 130 and 167; very probably, much later; for both the language and the prophecies prove them to be forgeries.

In the first book of these oracles, the pretended Sibyl says, " that the Son of the
" great God should come clothed in flesh,
" made like to men on earth, and that he
" should have in his name, four vowels and
" two consonants †;" that is, he should be called *Ιησους*. No particular reason, however, appears why there should here be thought an

* Id. vol. i. and ii. Edition 1788, vol. ii. pages 130, &c. 180, &c. 190, &c.

† This description of the Saviour is childish, and plainly discovers an imitation of the heathen oracles; unworthy of a real prophet.

allusion to St. Matthew, because this is the name given to our Saviour by the angel, in his interview with Mary, as it is related by St. Luke. In the 8th book, there are several passages concerning the birth, &c. of Christ, all of which are evidently taken from St. Luke's Gospel, one only excepted; "the
 "wonderous new star that appeared was re-
 "vered by the wise men." What was said above of Ignatius's testimony, is applicable also, in some degree, to this passage. Besides, it is universally granted, that the Sibylline oracles, which were published at different times, and, most probably, by different persons, are, in many places, very unlike what they were when they first appeared *.

Justin Martyr, in his first apology †, about 140 or 150, says, "at the same time an angel was sent to the same virgin, saying,
 "behold thou shalt conceive in thy womb,
 "by the Holy Ghost, and thou shalt bring
 "forth a son, and he shall be called the son
 "of the Highest; and thou shalt call his
 "name Jesus, for he shall save his people

* Lardner's Credib. part 2, vol. ii. ch. 29, page 703, &c. Edition 1788, vol. ii. page 313, &c.

† N^o. 75, edit. Thirlby. Edit. Colon. apol. 2, page 75.

“ from their sins; as they have taught us,” adds he “ who have written the history of “ all things, concerning our Saviour Jesus “ Christ, and we believe them.”

The words supposed to be here cited from St. Matthew, are, “ for he shall save his “ people from their sins,” Matth. i. 21. This, however, is by no means certain; for all the other parts of the quotation are taken out of St. Luke, though in a manner somewhat disordered. These words, therefore, may be no more than a loose citation, by memory, from St. Luke, or a reference to some other passages of the same writer *. See Acts iv. 12. x. 43. The thought occurs in a variety of places in the New Testament; so that we are not necessarily obliged to conclude that there is an allusion to St. Matthew, and to no other evangelist †.

There is a passage in Hegesippus, who lived about the year 173, that is preserved by Eu-

* The manner in which the writers of the New Testament, make citations from the Old, plainly shews that they often quoted from memory.

† Justin also seems to allude to the Arabian Magi, Matth. ii. 11th, in his Dialogue with Trypho, page 315. C. Cologne 1686, but it may be only an allusion to a common tradition. See page 99. &c.

sebius,

sebius, and which seems to allude to the second chapter. "Domitian, too, was afraid of the coming of Christ, as well as Herod *." It is hence inferred, that in whatever language the copy of St. Matthew's Gospel, used by Hegesippus, was written, he acknowledged the second chapter. But this is inferring rather more than the premises will bear. That he alluded to a part of the chapter, is the most that can reasonably be thought, and even that is not quite certain.

H 2

He

* Domitian could not be afraid "of the coming of Christ," for the increasing number of Christians, through all parts of the empire, proved that Christ was come, and was, as reported, put to death about 8 years before Domitian was born. Domitian was born about the year 41, became emperor in 81, and was put to death by his guards, in 96, of Christ. Hegesippus, as cited by Eusebius, says, that this emperor examined some descendants of King David, but finding them poor, and incon siderable, peaceably dismissed them. It is very probable that Herod, well acquainted with the expectations of the Jews, might be apprehensive of disturbances; for he was a jealous, cruel tyrant. Domitian hearing that the Jews still entertained the same expectations, took all necessary precautions to prevent disturbances during his reign. The words of Hegesippus, therefore, might refer to the suspicions and fears of Herod, and not to the words recorded, Matthew ii. 3d. Euseb. Hist. Eccles. l. iii. c. 19, 20. Lardner, vol. ii. page 142, edit. 1788.

After

He might only refer to a tradition common in his day, and, *possibly*, a true tradition *. For granting these chapters to be spurious, they may, and doubtless do, contain some things which really happened. The question before us, is not whether all the facts here related are true, but whether this history of them was, or was not, drawn up by St. Matthew. Whoever reads the Fathers will frequently meet with allusions to common traditions, and to known and acknowledged apocryphal books.

But Irenæus, a few years after Hegesippus, undoubtedly refers to these chapters, as genuine. "Matthew," says he, "relates his
" generation which is according to man;
" the book of the generation of Jesus Christ,
" the son of David, the son of Abraham."

Again, "the Gospel according to Matthew
" was written to the Jews, for they earnestly
" desired a Messiah of the seed of David:
" and Matthew having, also, the same de-

* After all that hath above been said, these passages in Ignatius, the Sibyline oracles, Justin Martyr, and Hegesippus, may be allusions to these chapters: my observations and reasonings are only intended to shew, that this is not absolutely unquestionable.

“ fire, to a yet greater degree, strove by all
 “ means to give them full satisfaction, that
 “ Christ was of the seed of David: where-
 “ fore he began with his genealogy.” Ire-
 næus, also mentions Joseph’s flight into Egypt,
 &c. lib. iii. c. 25 *.

It is undeniable, from these passages, that
 Irenæus acknowledged and received the first

* One would be ready to think that Irenæus did not
 duly consider what he said; for he both expressed him-
 self very unguardedly and improperly. Could an apos-
 tle labor under any difficulty in proving Jesus to be the
 descendant of David? Was it right in Irenæus to say,
 that St. Matthew *was earnestly desirous, and strove by all
 means, to prove this point.* This is an insinuation un-
 favourable to the character of the evangelist, and which
 ought not to be admitted. These words seem to imply
 something of an uncertainty. The first and second
 chapters of this Gospel were commonly attributed to St.
 Matthew, in the days of Irenæus, about the year 178,
 nor had he any *positive proofs* that they were not of that
 apostle’s composition. However, one would suspect,
 from his language, that he had some doubts about the
 matter, which he was afraid to mention. In short those
 expressions of Irenæus are mysterious and unaccount-
 able.

Fragmenta Irenæi apud Massuet, page 347. See
 also Lardner’s Cred. part 2, vol. i. Art. Irenæus. page
 106, edition 1788, vol. ii. page 159.

and second chapters, as the genuine production of St. Matthew.

Clement of Alexandria, about the year 194, or later, says, " that the Gospels containing " the genealogies were first written *." In another place he says, " In the Gospel according to Matthew, the genealogy from " Abraham is brought down to Mary the " mother of the Lord †." These testimonies, also, appear unquestionable.

Tertullian, about the year 200, calls St. Matthew the most faithful historian, as being a companion of the Lord, who, for no other reason, says he, than that we might be informed of the origin of Christ according to the flesh, began in this manner, " The book " of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of " David, the son of Abraham ‡."

As we come lower down, we find these chapters very frequently alluded to; but it is not necessary to produce a greater number of

* Euseb. Eccles. Hist. lib. 6, cap. 14.

† Strom. lib. 1, page 341. B. Paris, 1629. Lardner's Credib. part 2, vol. ii. Art. Clement. edition 1788, vol. ii. page 221.

‡ De Carne Christi, cap. 22. D. Paris, 1664. Lardner's Credib. part 2, vol. ii. Art. Tertullian. Edition 1788, vol. ii. page 261.

testimonies to that purpose. The silence of the apostolical Fathers, for so long a period, rather makes against their authenticity; especially, when it is considered, that these Fathers often cite, or refer to, other parts of this Gospel; and had frequent occasion, in their debates with Jewish unbelievers, to refer, also, to the first and second chapters, had they known or acknowledged them to be genuine. The silence of the Fathers, for nearly two centuries, and the frequency with which these chapters are alluded to by later writers, seems to shew that they were either not known, or not considered as authentic during that period.

Thus we see that our suspicion, regarding these chapters, is grounded not only on the testimony of Epiphanius, Tatian, and the Gospel of the *Ebionites*, but, also, on the silence of several Fathers, for 50 years at least, perhaps for 114 years, after St. Matthew's Gospel was received by the Christian church.

The first and second chapters of St. Matthew's Gospel are inserted in the Syriac version of the New Testament, and this may be considered as a strong argument in favour of their authenticity. This version certainly is the

most ancient now extant: but it doth not appear to be of so early an age as hath been supposed by some authors, nor of so late a date as others have imagined. The Syrians themselves affirm that it was made by St. Mark *, the evangelist; but that cannot be true, if St. Mark died, as is commonly thought, in the eighth year of Nero, before the Gospel by St. John was written, and, indeed, before the canon of the New Testament in general could be publicly known and received.

There is, in Asseman's *Bib. Orient.* tom. ii. page 486, an account of a Syriac manuscript of the four Gospels, at the end of which are the following words: " There was at Edeffa
 " an ancient written Gospel, but which was
 " still legible: not a single iota was expunged,
 " and it was more legible than some modern
 " books. By reason of its great age the ten

* The Syrians, from tradition, say that Mark, the evangelist, the disciple of St. Peter, translated, not only his own Gospel, but all the other books of the New Testament into the Galilean, or Syriac Language. This cannot be true, for he died before all the books of the New Testament were published; and if he did, it does not follow, that our present Syriac version is that which was made by him. Leusden *Phil. Hebræo-mixtus*, Diff. 9, page 66, &c.

" first

“ first leaves had been lost. At the end was
“ the following subscription.

“ This sacred book was finished on Wed-
“ nesday the 18th day of the first month Ca-
“ nun (i. e. December) in the year 389 (of
“ the Greeks, i. e. in the year of Christ 78)
“ by the hand of the apostle Achæus, a fel-
“ low-labourer of Mar Mari, and a disciple
“ of the apostle Mar Adæus, *whom we intreat*
“ *to pray for us.* Amen.” Michael, introd.
Lect. page 110, 111.

But this subscription destroys the authority of the tradition, because praying to dead saints did not obtain in the church till several centuries after this period. Prayers for the dead martyrs were not appointed till about the year 271, nor invocations till the year 590, or thereabouts.

Professor Michaelis produces another strong argument against this early age of the Syriac version; that is, some traces of a superstition which he cannot impute to the apostles, nor, indeed, to their immediate descendants; such as, that celibacy is a particularly holy state. 1 Cor. vii. 2, 6, 7. The Greek of ver. 2. “ let every man have his own wife, is ren-
“ dered,

“dered, let every man keep his own wife;” as if St. Paul meant not to recommend an entrance into the married state, but a continuance in it: in ver. 6, *ἀλλὰ συγγενήματα*, is rendered in the Syriac, *as to the weak*, and in ver. 7, is added the expression *בדכיותא* *in purity* *.

But though the Syriac version is not of the apostolic age, yet we have several conclusive proofs of its having been made very early. First, it was made before the Syrians were divided into different sects; for it was unanimously received by all the sects of Syrian Christians; by the Nestorians, Jacobites, and Maronites. This would hardly have happened, were it not more ancient than the origin of these sects.

Farther, it was made before there was any difference in the church between bishops and presbyters or elders. Thus in Philip. i. 1. *σὺν ἐπισκοποῖς*, *cum episcopis*, is rendered *עם קשישא*, *cum presbyteris*. See, also, Tit. i. 7, and 1 Tim. iii. 1. *ἐπισκοπῇ*, *episcopatus*, is rendered *קשישותא*, *senium, senectus*. It is plain, from this translation, that, at the time when the Syriac version was made, the author looked upon

* Introd. Lect. page 117.

ἐπισκοπος and πρεσβυτερος, to mean the same officer in the church *.

The first writer who seems to make this distinction is Ignatius: for he appropriated the title of *bishop* or *overseer*, to that minister who was the immediate overseer or governor of a parish, and that of *elder* or *presbyter*, to him who had no particular care or inspection of a parish, but was only an assistant or curate to the bishop that had; the word *bishop* denoting a relation to a flock or *cure*; the word *presbyter* signifying only a power or an ability to take the charge of such a flock or cure; the former implying an actual discharge of the office, the latter a power so to do. See Lord King's *Primitive Church*, page 65, 66, edition 1691. See, also, Jerom, tom. 2, epist. 83, ad Ocean. page 106, Paris, 1546 †, and Daille on the

* Ærius, about the year 360, said, that a bishop and presbyter are the same in order, office and dignity; and Tillemont considers the followers of Ærius as Calvinists, because they seceded from the catholic church. Lardner, vol. iv. 306—308.

† “Quamquam apud Veteres iidem Episcopi et Presbyteri fuerint; quia illud nomen dignitatis est, hoc, ætatis.”

the right use of the Fathers. Book 1, page 162, London, 1675.

But though Ignatius seems, in several places, to distinguish between bishops and presbyters, yet there is one place where he does not appear to make any material difference. Ὑποτάσσομενοι τῷ ἐπισκοπῷ ὡς τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ, ὁμοίως καὶ τῷ πρεσβυτέρῳ. Epist. ad Trallesios, page 53. Ed. Isaac Vossius, 1646*. The testimony of these epistles is indeed, very suspicious; because, as hath been observed before, it is granted, on all hands, that

In the 85th epistle, ad evagn. tom. 2, page 109, ibid, “ cum apostolus, perspicue doceat, eosdem esse Presbyteros quos et Episcopos, &c.” The same language is used by Jerom in several other places. See Daille, Ubi supra.

* See also, ad Smyrnæos, sect. 8, οὐκ ἔστιν χωρὶς τοῦ Ἐπισκοποῦ, οὐτε βαπτίζειν, οὐτε ἀγαπῆν ποιεῖν. “ Non licitum est, sine episcopo, neque baptizare, neque agnoscere facere.” As presbyters, as well as bishops, administered baptism, and the Lord’s supper, this passage seems to imply that their dignity and office were the same. See, also, ad Trallesios, sect. 7. The language, in some places, seems remarkable, ἀντιψυχὸν ἐγὼ τῶν ὑποτάσσουμένων τῷ Ἐπισκοπῷ, πρεσβυτέροις, διακονοῖς, καὶ μετ’ αὐτῶν μοι τὸ μέρος γενοῖτο σchein ἐν Θεῷ. “ Unanimis ego cum subiectis

that if they are, in any measure, genuine, they are much corrupted and interpolated. As the love of pre-eminence soon appeared in men of these orders, no passages are more likely to be corrupted than those in which mention is made of bishops and presbyters. Mosheim de Reb. Christ. page 269, &c. *

Lastly,

“ subjectis episcopo, presbyteris, diaconis; et cum ipsis
 “ mihi pars fiat in Deo.” Vossius, or, as Cotelierius translates, “ devovear ego pro iis qui subditi sunt episcopo, presbyteris, diaconis, atque mihi contingat
 “ habere cum illis partem in Deo.” Ad Polycarp, sect. 6. According to this doctrine, nothing more is necessary to salvation than to submit to bishops, presbyters, and deacons. A passage, ad Ephesios, sect. 6, is rather singular. *Και ὅσω ἐλπεί τις σιγῶντα ἐπισκοπον, πλείονως αὐτον φοβείσθω.* “ Et quantum videt quis tacentem episcopum plus ipsum timeat.” Vossius. *Ὅσῳ οὖν ἐλπείτε σιωπῶντα τον ἐπισκοπον, πλείον αὐτον φοβείσθε.* “ Quanto itaque taciturniorem videritis episcopum, “ tanto magis eam revereamini.” Cotelierius. This passage, to me, is unintelligible, unless the writer meant, either that a bishop was to be respected, or feared for his pride, or for seldom preaching. Those, and similar passages, sufficiently shew that even the smaller epistles of Ignatius are so corrupted as not to be relied upon in any matter of controversy.

* That the love of pre-eminence obtained very much
 in

Lastly, This ancient Syriac version was made before the disputed books of the New Testament were received by the Syriac church : for the second epistle of St. Peter, the second and third of John, the epistle of Jude, and the Revelation, are wanting in it. It was certainly known and received before the days of Ephrem, about 370 ; for he quotes the New Testament according to the Syriac version now extant.

From the whole it seems evident, that though the Syriac version is not so ancient as the apostolic age, yet that it was made very early ; perhaps some time in the second century, and, possibly, towards the beginning of

in early ages, and rapidly increased, appears from the writings of the primitive Fathers for several centuries. Cyprian, about the year 248, seems to have gone beyond all who were before him in asserting episcopal claims. But he denied the supreme power of the bishop of Rome. “ In quo ita naturæ et propensione suæ obsequitur, ut neminem ante ipsum inter Christianos, ne *Ignatio* quidem excepto, magno episcoporum patrono magnificentius de principatu et auctoritate episcoporum loquutum esse, neminem potestatem eorum altius extulisse, putem.” Mosheim de Rebus Christ. Sac. Text. Sect. 24, page 589.

it,

it, because of the great number of Christian converts that were in Syria from the first publication of the Gospel. It might be made about the time we find these chapters referred to in the writings of some ancient fathers.

Consult Michaelis Introd. Lect. to the New Testament, and Dr. Ridley de Syriacis novi Fœderis Versionibus Dissertatio. Londini, 1761.

The Vulgate or old Italic is, also, very ancient, though later than the Syriac; but neither of them more ancient than the writings of some Fathers now extant, who seem to refer to the first and second chapters of St. Matthew. Their being found in these versions is, therefore, no better a proof of their authenticity, than the writings of these Fathers.

To sum up the whole of what hath been said: we have undoubted evidence that these two chapters were wanting in some very ancient copies of this Gospel, which were used by the first Jewish Christians: the Ebionites certainly omitted these chapters, and we know that the genealogy was omitted by other Christians: it hath, also, been shewn, that we have no reason to think that they were inserted in the Hebrew, or Syro-chaldaic copy, which all
the

the Fathers jointly affirm to have been the original of St. Matthew: that it is not probable that they would have been expunged had they been genuine, because there was but one point in which they seemed to oppose the notions of some particular sects of Christians: and that these sects might have overcome the difficulty in a much safer way, by either reasoning, as Cerinthus actually did, from the genealogy, that Jesus was the son of Joseph and Mary; or by receiving St. Mark's Gospel, and rejecting St. Matthew's altogether *.

S E C T.

* We have numerous testimonies that the different sects of Christians acknowledged different Gospels.
 “ Porro fuere nonnulli olim qui solum Matthæi evangelium, recipiebant, ut Ebionitæ: quanquam et hoc
 “ non integrum, sed truncatum. Totam enim Christi
 “ genealogiam usque ad eum locum ubi Christus a Jo-
 “ hanne baptisatus esse describitur, a corpore evangelii
 “ Matthæi, refecabant. Quia nimirum credebant
 “ Christum, non e spiritu sancto sed e commixtione Jo-
 “ sephi cum Mariâ conceptum fuisse. Aliqui nonnisi
 “ Marcum acceptabant, quos Irenæus refellit, sed non
 “ nominat, lib. 3, cap. 11. Quidam solum Lucam, ut
 “ Marcionitæ et Cerdoniani: alii solum Johannem ad-
 “ mittebant, ut Manichæi. Alogiani, Johannem re-
 “ jiciebant, admissis tribus prioribus evangelistis: non
 “ enim initium evangelii Johannis, in quo Christus,
 “ λογος,

S E C T. VIII.

Some collateral Arguments which make against the Authenticity of these Chapters.

WE shall now proceed to consider some collateral arguments which seem to make against the authority of the first and second chapters of St. Matthew.

It has been observed by many writers *, that St. Mark, in most places, agrees with the method and order of both St. Matthew (see Dissertation,) and St. Luke; and, indeed, so doth St. John, after a short introduction concerning the *Λογος*. St. Mark begins his Gospel at what we now call the third

“ *λογος*, seu fermo vocatur, ferre poterant, quia id non
 “ intelligebant. Huic etiam nomen *alogianorum* (quod
 “ est, absque sermone) sortiti sunt.” Wolzogenii prolegomena in Novum Testamentum, cap. iv. page 11.
 It was the opinion of Dr. Lardner that there was not such a sect as that of the Alogians. See his History of Heretics, page 446, 1780. Edition 1788, vol. ix. page 516.

* See Dr. Henry Owen's observations on the four Gospels, and Michaelis's Introd. Lect. sect. 93.

chapter of St. Matthew; that is, at the time when John came baptizing in the wilderness. As it is most probable that St. Luke was the first who published a Gospel, and as he had given the genealogy, and a full account of the birth, &c. of Christ, there was no necessity for those who came after him to repeat the same things, as they were not particularly important to the virtue and happiness of man, the great end which our Saviour and his disciples always had in view. These things having already been fully and circumstantially related by a writer of acknowledged and established authority in the church, it was enough for the other evangelists to begin their accounts with our Lord's public ministry. This was undoubtedly the case with regard to two of them; and, if the Nazarene Gospel be supposed to have been authentic, St. Matthew will be found to have acted in the same manner; a circumstance which, perhaps, might reasonably be expected.

Farther, St. Luke hath given a clear, consistent, and natural account of the birth of Jesus, and of all the events which followed it, till Joseph and Mary carried him home to Nazareth. But this whole account is totally
different

different * from that which is found in the first and second chapters of St. Matthew. There is not the most distant hint in St. Luke of the appearance of a star in the East; of the visit of the Magi to Bethlehem; of the flight into Egypt; or of the slaughter of the infants: In short, the account given by St. Luke, and that which appears in these chapters, agrees in no one circumstance, but in Christ's being born at Bethlehem of a virgin, and in his dwelling at Nazareth. It is very difficult to conceive that the person who so particularly relates the appearance of angels to shepherds in the field, to declare the birth of Jesus, should yet be entirely

* Lardner's Cred. part 1, vol. ii. page 800, &c. 3d edition. Vol. i. page 353, &c. 1788. Jewish and Heathen Test. vol. i. page 147. Vol. vii. page 118, and 133, 1788. But his reasonings will not apply to St. Matthew, and St. Luke's account of the genealogies. The words of Julius Africanus, contemporary with Origen, may be thought to imply, that St. Matthew's Genealogy was not then altogether unquestioned, or reputed of equal authority with St. Luke's. "For which reason neither is that Genealogy destitute of authority which the evangelist Matthew rehearses." Dr. Lardner was of opinion that this was not the meaning of Africanus, vol. ii. page 439, edition 1788. Africanus seems to have flourished about the beginning of the third century.

silent about another appearance of a much more public nature; a star in the heavens, which announced the same interesting event to people in distant countries. Nor is it likely that a writer, whose express purpose it was to record the wonderful circumstances that attended the introduction of the Messiah into the world, should omit the other extraordinary incidents which are found in the first and second chapters of St. Matthew; if he was acquainted with those incidents, and knew them to be true. What is still more, the account given by St. Luke will not admit of the various transactions described in these chapters, as will be shewn in the next section, when I come to consider the difficulties we meet with in them. All that I would observe farther in this place is, that the absolute silence of St. Luke, respecting the many remarkable events supposed to be related by St. Matthew, yields a strong negative argument against the authenticity of these two chapters.

S E C T. IX.

An Examination of the Difficulties contained in these Chapters.

BEFORE we enter upon the particular difficulties with which we are pressed by these chapters, it may be necessary to observe, that when a person carefully attends to their contents, he cannot but perceive something peculiar in both the sentiments and language; something different from what we meet with in other parts of the New Testament. For instance, God's warning Joseph, *in a dream*, to fly into Egypt, seems to have an eastern air; and the phrase by which that thought is expressed, is used no where in the New Testament, or, indeed, in the Old, but in these chapters, and here we find it five times.

Chap. i. 20. Κατ' οναρ εφανε αυτω, " *appeared to him by, or in a dream.*"

— ii. 12. Χρηματισθεντες κατ' οναρ, " *Being warned of God in a dream.*"

— 13. Φανειται κατ' οναρ, " *appeared in a dream.*"

— 19.

— 19. κατ' ὄναρ φαίνεται “ *appeared in a dream.*”

— 22. χρηματισθεὶς δὲ κατ' ὄναρ, “ *being warned of God in a dream.*”

The phrase, κατ' ὄναρ, is not once used by the Seventy. They always translate ἐλὴν &c. by ὕπνος. We have an instance of God's interposing for the comfort and deliverance of St. Paul, when in danger, on his voyage to Rome, Acts xxvii. 23. παρεστὴ γὰρ μοι τῇ νυκτὶ ταύτῃ ἄγγελος τοῦ Θεοῦ; “ *for there stood by me this night the angel of God.*” Not in a dream, but, as it would seem, in a real vision.

There is another passage in St. Matthew's Gospel, where the phrase κατ' ὄναρ, once occurs, but in a quite different sense. It is in chap. xxvii. 19. where Pilate's wife sends him a message, desiring that he would have nothing to do with the condemnation of Jesus, and assigning this as a reason; πολλὰ γὰρ ἐπάθον σήμερον κατ' ὄναρ δι' αὐτόν; “ *for I have suffered many things, this day, in a dream, because of him.*” This is very different from being warned of God in a dream; a circumstance particularly mentioned in all the other instances. As the name and character of Jesus were well known, there is no reason to imagine, that there was any thing
of

of a divine interposition in her dream *. However, as this is the only passage where the phrase, *κατ' οναρ*, occurs, in any sense, throughout the New Testament, except in the places abovementioned, may it not be asked, whether there be not something in the language made use of, and, especially, in the circumstances of Joseph's being so frequently warned of God *in a dream*, which indicates a different hand from that of the apostle?

Again, the appearance of a star in the east, directing the wise men to the new-born Messiah in Judea, has more the air of an eastern invention, than of a real history: to which may be added, that it will not be easy to reconcile the fact to the known laws of astronomy. Commentators are aware of the difficulty arising from this circumstance; and, therefore, at one time, it is a real star; at another, it is only a meteor. But how can it be said that a star, or, indeed, a meteor,

* See Lardner's Sermons, vol. ii. page 79. Edition 1788, vol. x, page 341. If there was any thing of a divine impulse in this dream, it is quite immaterial to the argument, because the peculiarity of the language, is here only taken notice of.

pointed to a street, much less, to one particular house? Besides, how could these wise men know what this appearance signified, unless they were inspired *?

Again, chap. ii. ver. 3. mentions a circumstance scarcely credible. "When Herod the king had heard these things, he was troubled, and *all Jerusalem* with him †." It is natural enough to suppose that Herod would be troubled, when he was informed that the Messiah was born, but that *all Jerusalem*, or even a great part of it, should be troubled on

* In order to account for this affair of the star, divines have advanced several strange positions: for instance, some say that the Magi (Michaelis calls them Jewish philosophers from Arabia) saw a luminous body in that quarter of the heavens, which, according to the science of astrology, belonged to Judea. The consequence of which position is, that astrology is approved of, and countenanced by God himself; for if he thus made a star a direction to the new-born Messiah, he confirmed the truth of that very absurd science. "From the sight of some such appearance in that quarter of the heavens which astrologers had appropriated to Judea, the Arabian Magi inferred that Jesus Christ was born, &c." Bishop Chandler's Defence of Christianity, p. 7. See also Lardner, vol. viii. page 20—21, 1788.

† See Dr. Lardner, edition 1788, vol. vii. page 133, and page 137.

that

that account, is not easy to believe. Was it possible that the Jews should be terrified at an event which they had so long and so earnestly desired? Could they be grieved, or troubled, to hear that the long-expected Messiah, the consolation of Israel, was born? The turn of the sentence plainly shews, that Herod, and *all Jerusalem*, felt the same emotions, when they understood the occasion of the *Magi's* visit: Granting, therefore, that *ταρασσω* may sometimes signify to astonish, &c. yet it cannot have that meaning in this place, because Herod was evidently terrified, or distressed. The word rendered, "*troubled*," is used in the same form by St. Luke i. 12. and St. John xiii. 21. and means, in each, either fear or sorrow; which, indeed, seems to be its primary signification, wherever it is used in the New Testament.

Another peculiarity in these chapters is the behaviour of the Magi to the child Jesus: "they fell down and worshipped him," ch. ii. 11. *Proidentes adorantium gestus. Adoraverunt eum, puerum cæteris similem, sine corona, satellitio, in paupere Casa.* Pol. Synops. in Loc. St. Luke, though he relates different visits which were paid to Jesus, mentions nothing of any act of homage offered to him.
Thus

Thus he tells us simply that the shepherds came and saw him; that Simeon came *by the Spirit* into the temple, took the child in his arms, and blessed God; and that Anna the Prophetess gave thanks, also, unto the Lord: but neither of them worshipped the child. This behaviour of the Magi, if it be a fact, implies, that they knew more of Jesus than they who came *by the spirit*, to see him, and who were waiting for the consolation of Israel. See Luke ii. 10. The verb προσκυνεω*, it is granted, does sometimes signify the honour which we pay to men. See Matth. xviii. 26. Mark xv. 19. and Rev. iii. 9. which are the only places where it is unquestionably used in that sense in the New Testament. However, it seems in this passage to signify divine honor, and is so translated in several modern versions.

But to be more particular: the many other acknowledged difficulties which occur in these two chapters may incline us to doubt their authenticity.

The late ingenious and learned Dr. Wall

* This verb, in the French version, always means religious worship, which Le Clerc says is a fault. See his Supplement to Hammond on Matth. 2. 11.

observes,

observes, that if these chapters could be proved, for certain, spurious, the greatest difficulties in any books of the New Testament would be removed: for, adds he, " the account of " the genealogy in St. Matthew is the most " difficult to reconcile with St. Luke, or with " itself, of any place of the Gospel." And, in another place, he says, " that there are " more difficulties in these chapters, than in " all the bible beside *.

That this is not an exaggerated representation of the matter will fully appear from an impartial examination of them.

All writers agree that the genealogy is not only very imperfect, but, also, not easily to be reconciled with the Old-Testament history. However, this is accounted for by some, who suppose that St. Matthew took it out of the public records; and, therefore, that he is not responsible for its exactness. But, granting this to be the case, he might of himself have been able to correct it, at least, in several places. The books of Kings and Chronicles, with which he was certainly acquainted, might have preserved him from some of the mistakes

* Wall's critical notes on the beginning of St. Matthew, and preface, page 48.

into which he now hath undeniably fallen, But it is by no means credible that the Jewish records of families should be so very erroneous: for the genealogy of the royal line was faithfully preserved in the Old Testament till the captivity; whereas in the first chapter of St. Matthew it is plainly incorrect, even during a period in which that family may be said to have been in its greatest glory; that is, between the reign of David and the destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar. However, supposing that St. Matthew took this genealogy out of some imperfect register, and that he was not, of himself, able to correct it; did that Being who moved him to write, labour under the same inability? Could not the Holy Spirit rectify such evident mistakes? This no one will presume to say. The consequence then is, that in this instance, at least, St. Matthew, if he was the author of the genealogy, wrote without inspiration.

After all, we have strong reasons to believe that this genealogy was not taken out of the public records; for if it had, a perfect agreement between St. Matthew and St. Luke might naturally have been expected; whereas their accounts are now totally different from

David

David to Christ. It is not to be supposed that the Jews had more than one public register of their families; and we may well conclude, from Luke ii. 4. that this was, upon the whole, correct. I say, *public register*, for should it be imagined that St. Matthew took his relation out of some private register, he would be still more inexcusable; because the descent of our Lord from David was a point which required the clearest proof; since, otherwise, the Jews, for whose particular use it is generally believed that this Gospel was written, might have objected, that it was not decisively shewn that Jesus was their promised Messiah.

Dr. Hammond, indeed, on Luke iii. 23. says, "that it was ordinary, among the Jews, "to find different pedigrees which seem to "contradict one another, when they do not." I know not upon what authority this is said by the Doctor, but it is highly improbable; especially with respect to their public registers of the royal line, which appear to have been preserved with the utmost care. As to any private records, it is not very likely that an apostle would make use of, or depend upon them, when they differed from those which
were

were public; for that would be to destroy his own authority.

Most commentators think to reconcile this genealogy with that given by St. Luke, by saying, that the former is the descent of Joseph, the reputed father of Jesus; and the latter, the descent of Mary the mother of our Saviour *. Matthew is supposed to give the legal descent of Jesus, as the adopted son of Joseph, and Luke the real descent. But this is a conjecture which was thought of to remove a pressing difficulty, and seems directly to contradict the very first verse of St. Matthew's Gospel: "The book of the generation
" of *Jesus Christ*, the son of David, the son
" of Abraham." The name of Joseph is not mentioned till the 16th verse. Besides, the genealogy of Joseph was not to the purpose; because Joseph's being the lineal descendant of David, did not prove that Jesus was so likewise, as he was not the son of Joseph. St. Luke's genealogy, indeed, is well sup-

* Justin Martyr says, that both Matthew and Luke's Genealogies were Joseph's; one, his natural, the other his legal. Quæst. et respons. ad orthodox. Quæst. 133, et respons. page 483—4. Edit. Colon. 1686, page 484.

ported,

ported, and is attended with few, if any, real objections; whereas the other is liable to many objections, and some of them almost insuperable. Let it be observed, that though David, and his descendants, had a promise of the throne, yet it is nowhere said, that the Messiah was to be the son of Solomon. It is, therefore, most likely that, according to St. Luke, Jesus was a descendant, by his mother, of Nathan, another son of David. This will appear still more probable, when we consider, that the royal line of David, by Solomon, failed in Jechoniah, the grandson of Josiah, as will be presently shewn.

But, not to content myself with these general observations, I shall particularly examine this genealogy.

It is divided into three lists of names, each consisting, as it is here said, of fourteen generations, beginning with Abraham, and ending with Christ.

The first series, from Abraham to David, is liable to no particular objection, but what equally affects * the Old Testament chronology;

* Mr. Jackson, with great probability, observes, that some generations seem to have been omitted in this genealogy;

logy; such as the improbability of Rahab's bearing her son Booz when drawing towards 90 years of age; and that her son Booz, her grandson Obed, and her great grandson, Jesse, should each of them have a son at an hundred. All this will not seem very probable, when we recollect that the birth of Isaac is represented as miraculous, because his parents were about that age.

The first series is :

- | | |
|-------------|--------------|
| 1. Abraham, | 8. Aminadab, |
| 2. Isaac, | 9. Naasson, |
| 3. Jacob, | 10. Salmon, |
| 4. Judah, | 11. Booz, |
| 5. Pharez, | 12. Obed, |
| 6. Efram, | 13. Jesse, |
| 7. Aram, | 14. David. |

The next series, though called 14, is in truth 17 generations, as appears from the following catalogue :

nealogy; either between Naasson and Salmon, or between Salmon and Booz; perhaps, four or five generations between Salmon and Booz, the father of Obed. See Jackson's Chronology, vol. i. page 171, &c.

1. Solomon,

- | | |
|----------------|----------------|
| 1. Solomon, | 10. Uzziah, |
| 2. Rehoboam | 11. Joatham, |
| 3. Abia, | 12. Ahaz, |
| 4. Afa, | 13. Hezekiah, |
| 5. Jehosaphat, | 14. Manasseh, |
| 6. Joram, | 15. Amon, |
| 7. Ahaziah, | 16. Josiah, |
| 8. Joash, | 17. Jechoniah. |
| 9. Amaziah, | |

See the books of Kings and Chronicles.

In this series, as it stands in St. Matthew, Ahaziah, Joash, and Amaziah, are omitted. This could not be on account of their great wickedness, because we find that Ahaz, Manasseh, and Amon, men as wicked as themselves, are inserted.

The Jews, it is true, often called the descendant of man his son, though several generations intervened. Thus Christ was called the son of David: but this practice cannot be applied to remove the difficulty in the second series, because it is expressly said, that from Solomon to Jechoniah there were fourteen generations, when, in fact, there were seventeen. Not to mention several ways taken by divines to account for this omission, because they are all insufficient, we shall only take notice of the

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learned

learned Dr. Whitby's solution. " It is here
 " observable," says he, " that the apostle saith
 " of the generations from Abraham to David,
 " that they were in *all, fourteen*; but when he
 " comes to the second interval, he does not
 " say, as before, *παραί 'αί, γενεαί*, (that) the four-
 " teen mentioned by him, were *all* the gene-
 " rations of that interval, as knowing that, for
 " good reasons, he had omitted three belong-
 " ing to that interval; but only that the whole
 " number of those which he had named were
 " fourteen, as really they were." Annot. on
 Matth. i. 17.

It is a pity that this observation is not as
 solid as it is plausible: for it is certain that,
 agreeably to the idiom of all languages, ancient
 and modern, the adjective *παραί* refers to *γενεαί*,
 in the second and third class, as well as in the
 first. The repetition of it would have been
 both unusual and inelegant. The Doctor was
 too well acquainted with language in general
 to offer such an argument, had he not been
 pressed with a formidable difficulty*.

* The late bishop Pearce was so sensible of the in-
 correctness of this genealogy, that he hints a suspicion
 concerning the authenticity of the 17th verse of the first
 chapter. This is also the opinion of bishop Newcome.
 See his Harmony of the Gospels.

The

The third series is attended with still greater difficulties.

- | | |
|---------------|--------------|
| 1. Salathiel, | 8. Eliud, |
| 2. Zorobabel, | 9. Eliazar, |
| 3. Abiud, | 10. Matthan, |
| 4. Eliakim ; | 11. Jacob, |
| 5. Azor, | 12. Joseph, |
| 6. Sadoc, | 13. Jesus. |
| 7. Achim, | |

Here are but thirteen, though called fourteen generations.

Different schemes have been proposed to supply this deficiency. Dr. Hammond, who is one of the most judicious writers on the New Testament, mentions a very ancient *Hebrew* copy of this Gospel, in which an Abner was inserted between Eliakim and Azor. However, not satisfied with this solution, the Doctor himself assigns another, much more probable; that is, a different reading of ver. 11. Instead of "Josias begat Jeconias;" we should read, "Josias begat Jachim, and Jachim begat Jeconias." This reading, indeed, as it is found in several manuscripts, deserves attention; for Jeconiah was really the grandson, and not the son, of Josiah. See 2 Kings, chapters 23, 24, 25.

Josiah was succeeded in the throne by a son called Jehoahaz, who reigned about three months: to him succeeded another son of Josiah, called Eliakim, or Jehoiakim. He reigned eleven years, and then died; and he was succeeded by his son Jehoiachin, called by some writers, Jehoiakim the second. This is the order in which that part of Josiah's family, which concerns the genealogy did reign. But then, this last series must begin, not with Salathiel, but with Jehoiakim, otherwise called Jeconiah and Coniah, Jerem. xxii. 28. which will make up the fourteen generations.

But still there remains an unsurmountable difficulty; for Jeconiah died childless, and therefore he could not be the father of Salathiel. "Write ye this man childless." The original word is עָרִירִי, and it occurs only in this place, and Genesis xv. 2. where Abraham says, "I go childless." And afterwards, verse 3, he adds, "Behold, to me thou hast given "no seed, and, lo, one born in my house is "mine heir." In this passage, the word will not admit of any sense, "but childless*."

It

* Abraham was childless when he thus spoke, and when the connection is attended to, I am clearly of opinion,

It is used twice in the plural number ; Levit.

nion, that it can in Leviticus admit of no other sense. In verse 17, " to be cut off in the sight of their people, and to bear iniquity," seem to have the same meaning. " To bear sin," and " to die childless," in the 20th, and 21st verses, were punishments less severe. However, to have no children was mortifying to the descendants of Abraham ; for knowing the promise, they all hoped that the Messiah would descend from their family. A learned Jew in conversation, and learned Christians in conversation and in writing, have contended with me, for the sense of " unprosperous : " but hitherto, I can see no reason to alter my opinion ; because Abraham, when he made use of this word, was not unprosperous.

In 1st Chronicles iii. 17—18—19, it is said that Jeconiah had children and grandchildren ; but the Books of Chronicles are not correct in many places. This prince lived near 37 years, (Jerem 52. 31.) after he was carried captive into Babylon, and during that period, might have had children ; but it would seem that neither of them returned to Judea ; perhaps, they died before him, at least, died without children. Tremellius thinks that Jeconiah had no son called Assir, nor any son at all ; and that the word Assir is not a proper name, but an epithet, and means, " bound," or " captive." יָדָא. Psalm, lxxix. 11. Isaiah, xlii. 7. He would read the passage, " and the sons of Jeconiah, the captive, (or who was carried away captive) Salathiel his son." It was also his opinion that Salathiel was called his son, only because he was thought to succeed him as chief governor of the Jews in Babylon ; but that he really was the son of Neri. Luke iii. 27. This was also the opinion of Capellus.

xx. 20, 21. In Genesis and Leviticus it undeniably means, childless: and in this sense it seems to have been understood by translators, until they were pressed with a difficulty in St. Matthew's genealogy. Then it was supposed to be derived from ערר, *nudari*, to be naked, desolate, cast off, or rejected. Thus it is rendered by Leusden and Dr. John Taylor: but Buxtorff adds, also, αλεκνος, *sine liberis*. This is the translation of the Septuagint in Genesis and Leviticus, but in Jeremiah they have rendered it by εκκηρυκτος, *expulsus, ejectus, cast out, or rejected*: which Greek word, Constantine, in his lexicon, explains by αποδνητος, *vilis, abjiciendus*. This version of Leusden, Taylor, and the Septuagint, will, certainly, suit the passage in Jeremiah, but it will by no means suit the other passages. If a word occurs only four times in all, and in three of them has one plain determinate meaning, it is contrary to all rules of criticism, to understand it in a different sense in the 4th, unless the connection of that passage renders the usual sense utterly impossible; which is not the case with this passage in Jeremiah. It is true that in Jeremiah xxii. 28. mention is made of Je-

coniah's

coniah's seed *; but as, in the 30th verse, he is said to be childless, I should rather think that the Hebrew word *יָרַע*, in that place, should be understood in a figurative sense, as signifying *help, support, assistance*, from *riches*,

* The Vatican Septuagint reads, Jerem. 22. 28. "Jechonias is despised (or, dishonoured) as a vessel wherein there is no pleasure; he is rejected, and is cast out into a land which he knoweth not." There is no mention made of his seed. The Alexandrian Septuagint hath the passages wanting in the Vatican; but are supposed to have been inserted by Origen from Theodotion, or from some other resion. They are also found in the Hebrew; nor doth Dr. Kennicott mention any manuscript, in which they are omitted.

The word *יָרַע* is variously rendered by Translators. In Leviticus, Onkelos explains it by *יָלֵא יֵלֵא*; absque liberis; and so doth Jerom: the scholiast, *ἀντὶ τοῦ οὐλογισθῆ το σπέρμα αὐτῶν εἰς τέκνα* non reputabitur semen eorum pro liberis. In Jeremiah, the Vatican and Alexandrian copies have *ἐκκηρυκτος*, expulsus, &c. Aquila, in his first version, hath *στειρος*, sterilis; in his second, *ἀναυξητος*, non crescens. Symmachus, *κενος*, vacuus. Theodotion, probably *ἐδελυκτος*, abominabilis, abdicatus. Hence we perceive that the principal idea annexed to this Hebrew term was, childless, or one having no posterity. Buxtorff and Stockius render the word, solitarius; absque liberis.

See Joh. Drusius, veterum interpretum Græcor. fragmenta. Arnheim. 1622. page 523.

friends, &c. This is not an unusual sense of the word. See Psalm lxxxiii, 8. *היו זרוע לבני לוט*.
 “ They have holpen, i. e. they have been
 “ friends to, the children of Lot.” See Taylor’s
 Concordance. See also Stockius.

That Salathiel was not the son of Jechoniah, is the opinion of Mr. Lowth. “ God
 “ would have it taken notice of,” says he,
 “ as a remarkable judgment on Jechoniah,
 “ that in him, the direct line of the Jewish
 “ kings, from Solomon downward, should
 “ fail; and the next heir to the crown should
 “ be of a collateral branch, viz. Salathiel;
 “ who was the son of Neri, and derived his
 “ pedigree from Nathan the son of David.”
 Lowth on Jerem. xxii. 30.

Farther, another difficulty immediately occurs; for, in the 12th verse, it is said, that Salathiel begat Zorobabel; whereas, in 1 Chron. iii. 17—19. we read that Zorobabel was the son of Pedaiah, the brother of Salathiel.

This difficulty the pious, learned, and candid Dr. Doddridge, knew not how to get over. These are his words: “ If this solution (that
 “ is, that there were two of the name of Zorobabel) be not allowed, I see not how the
 “ known

“ known difficulty here can be removed ; un-
 “ less by acknowledging that the books of
 “ Chronicles (the author of which is un-
 “ known) may have suffered by the injuries
 “ of time, so that the present reading of some
 “ passages may be incorrect, which is very
 “ consistent with owning the plenary inspira-
 “ tion of these books. By allowing this,
 “ we should fairly get rid of two parts in
 “ three, of the seeming contradictions, in the
 “ writings of the Old Testament, (I speak
 “ on an accurate review of them), *and should*
 “ *be free from the sad necessity of such evasive*
 “ *criticisms, as are more like to pain a candid*
 “ *heart, than to satisfy an attentive, and pe-*
 “ *netrating mind*.*”

It may, however, be observed, that the
 genealogy in this chapter is not only incon-
 sistent with the book of Chronicles, but, also,
 with the book of Kings ; and, therefore, *all*
 difficulties will not be removed, by granting
all the Doctor requires.

They who are acquainted with the charac-
 ter of Herod, will think that his speech to the

* Additional notes on the Harmony of the Gospels,
 vol. iii. note 10.

wise men is not at all consistent with his known disposition and conduct. "Go, and search
 "diligently for the young child, and when
 "ye have found him, bring me word again,
 "that I may come and worship him also."
 "It is really an amazing thing," says Dr. Doddridge, "that so suspicious and artful a
 "prince as Herod, should put this important
 "affair on what might seem so precarious a
 "foot; when it would have been so easy, if
 "he had not gone himself under pretence of
 "doing an honour to these learned strangers,
 "to have sent a guard of soldiers with them
 "to have slaughtered the child and his pa-
 "rents*." The manner in which the Doc-
 tor endeavours afterwards to account for this
 behaviour of Herod, reminds one of what he
 calls, *evasive criticisms*, and unsupported con-
 jectures.

There are in the two first chapters of St. Matthew several prophecies of the Old Testament said to be fulfilled, but which cannot easily be made to correspond with the events by which they are declared to be accomplished.

* Doddridge on Matthew, chap. ii. 8. note i.

The first is in chap. i. 22, 23. "Behold
 " a virgin shall be with child," &c. When
 we consult the passage in Isaiah, from whence
 these words are taken, it is not easy to per-
 ceive what connection there can be between a
 child born in the days of Ahaz, and given as
 a sign of safety to him and to his people; and
 the Messiah, born about seven hundred years
 afterwards. But of this prophecy I shall
 not speak particularly, as the question con-
 cerning its meaning hath lately been debated
 at large *.

Chap. ii. 6. seems to contradict Micah v,
 ver. 2. from whence it is taken. The pro-
 phet, it is true, may refer here to the Messiah;
 but the evangelist and he differ in what they
 say of Bethlehem. The prophet says, "But
 " thou Bethlehem Ephratah, *though thou be*
 " *little among the thousands of Judah,*" &c.
 whereas the evangelist says, "And thou Beth-
 " lehem in the land of Judah, *art not the*
 " *least among the princes of Judah,*" &c. The

* Vid. Kennicott's sermon and notes on Isaiah, ch.
 vii. 13—16; a critical dissertation on ditto, in answer to
 Dr. Kennicott; and Mr. Granville Sharpe's remarks on
 that dissertation.

various ways taken to remove this difficulty are far from being satisfactory *.

The slaughter of the infants at Bethlehem, though so remarkable a fact, is not mentioned by any writer but by the supposed St. Matthew, in this second chapter, and by those who quote from him. Josephus takes no notice of it, though he is very particular in relating the transactions of that time, and is supposed to have been a great enemy to Herod, because he seems ever ready to mention all his acts of cruelty.

It is, indeed, hardly credible that he would have been silent about so barbarous and cruel an action, if Herod was really guilty of it; and it is not probable that he could have been ignorant of such an extraordinary and atrocious event.

* See an Essay for a new translation of the Bible, second edition, London, 1727, pages 109, &c. It is possible, that Dr. Owen may be right in his conjecture: that the particle $\alpha\lambda$ οὐδαμῶς, nequaquam, non, may have been dropped. The insertion of it, would reconcile the prophet and the evangelist; but the septuagint having it not, is rather unfavorable, though Justin Martyr, Origen, Tertullian, Cyprian, &c. have inserted it in their Citations.

See Dr. Owen on the Septuagint, page 51. White, London, 1769.

Some

Some writers have thought that Macrobius, in his Saturn, lib. ii. chap. 4. alluded to this transaction, when, among other jests of the Roman emperor, Augustus, he relates this: "It is better to be Herod's hog than his son." It is not, however, likely that the emperor alluded to the slaughter of the infants at Bethlehem, but to the cruelty of Herod in putting his own children to death. It is well known that Herod caused three of his sons to be executed, and, therefore, it is most natural to think that Augustus referred to his barbarous conduct towards his own family.

The learned and judicious Dr. Lardner lays very little stress upon this testimony of Macrobius *; and the manner in which Dr. Doddridge mentions it, shews that he did not look upon it as of much weight. His words, in a parenthesis, are: "Not to insist upon the argument from Macrobius, &c. that the emperor Augustus had heard of it at Rome †." Besides, Macrobius is too late an evidence to be depended upon in an affair of this nature; for he flourished in the latter end of the 4th

* Credib. part. i. vol. ii. book ii. chap. 2. Vol. i. page 336—7. See also vol. ix. page 23, &c. 1788.

† Vol. iii. additional notes, No. 62.

century, and was one of the chamberlains to the emperor Theodosius. The truth seems to be this: Macrobius found this saying of Augustus somewhere recorded, and imagined that it alluded to the slaughter at Bethlehem, which was in his day admitted by the Christians: whereas, indeed, what Augustus spoke was occasioned by the death of Antipater, or rather of Alexander and Aristobulus the sons of Herod*.

After this account of the slaughter of the infants, the supposed St. Matthew adds, "Then was fulfilled that which was spoken" by Jeremy the prophet, saying, in Ramah

* See Dr. Whitby on Matthew, chap. 2. It is said by Sixtus Senensis that Dion Cassius Niceus Græcus mentioned the Slaughter of the Infants, in a part of his history now lost. But as he has given no authorities, his evidence is of no weight. His words are, "Cujus etiam dicti Dion Cassius Niceus Græcus autor in vita ejusdem Augusti mentionem fecit." Bibliotheca Sancta, lib. sept. page 589, Colon. 1586.

Dion Cassius's Works are not perfect. Leunclavius, in the title page of his edition of that writer's history, says, "Partim integri, partim mutili, partim excerpti." Dion Cassius's history was published after the year of Christ, 230. His evidence, therefore, should he have mentioned the slaughter of the infants, is also too late to be depended upon.

" was

“ was there a voice heard, lamentation, &c.”
 This prophecy is cited from Jerem. xxxi.
 15, &c.

In this passage, the Prophet is unquestionably speaking of the captivity. Ramah was the place where Nebuzaradan gathered the Jews together, when he was going to carry them into Babylon. Ramah and Bethlehem were at a considerable distance from each other, and Jerusalem lay between them; Judges xix. Ramah, therefore, could not be said to be in the coasts of Bethlehem.

The Babylonish captivity was the most terrible disaster that ever befel the Jews, from their coming out of Egypt to the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus Vespasian: the Prophet, therefore, very poetically and beautifully, represents Rachel weeping and crying bitterly, when she saw her children gathered together in Ramah, in order to be carried out of their native land.

The Prophet farther says, “ that she” (Rachel) “ would not be comforted, because they “ were not.” But he does not mean that they should die: for he immediately adds, “ that they should come again from the land “ of the enemy to their own border:” That is, the persons themselves, or their descendants, should

should return; but slain infants could have no descendants to return. Upon the whole, this passage doth not seem to have any reference to the slaughter of these infants: it must, therefore, be an accommodation, and not a very natural one; because the prophecy and its application differ in two material points; the persons were *not* put to death in the prophecy, as they are in the history; and the lamentation, according to Jeremiah, in our present version, was at Ramah; but according to the evangelist, at Bethlehem, some considerable distance from Ramah*.

Dr. Doddridge, in a note on this passage, very cautiously observes, that “such things” are a sure argument, that a passage in scrip-

* If these chapters be really genuine, the best method we can take to adapt the words of the Prophet to the purpose of the Evangelist, is to render *ברמה* not “in Ramah,” but “on high;” from *רום*, *altum esse*, to be high or elevated. See Arias Montanus, Bishop Chandler’s Defence of Christianity, page 214, and Wolzogenius’s Comment. in Loc. “On high was there a voice heard,” &c. See Gen. xxxv. 19. xlviii. 7. 1 Sam. x. 2. Justin Martyr says, that there was a place called Ramah, in Arabia, which he thinks was the place intended by Jeremiah. I have not met with any other who mentions it. Dial. cum Tryph. page 304. Edit Colon.

“ture,

“ ture, whether prophetical; poetical, or his-
 “ torical, may in the language of the New
 “ Testament be said to be fulfilled, when an
 “ event happens to which it may, with great
 “ propriety, be accommodated.”

Farther, it is said, “ that Jesus dwelt in a
 “ city called Nazareth, that it might be ful-
 “ filled which was spoken by the prophets,
 “ he shall be called Nazarene.” But which
 of the prophets have said any such thing? The interpretation commonly given is, that the words *δια των προφητων*, *by the Prophets*; only signify that all the prophets seem to declare, that the Messiah would be a sufferer. But this explication is by no means satisfactory: for let the word *Ναζωραϊος*, *Nazarene*, or *Nazorite*, be derived from whatever root we please, it can never be said, that Jesus was *prophetically* called a Nazarene, from his dwelling at Nazareth. No one prophet so much as alludes to this circumstance. This passage, perhaps, was designed to be some vindication of the first Christians, who, by way of contempt, were called Nazarenes by the unbelieving Jews *.

L

Again,

* The reader may consult Dr. Hunt of Oxford's Sermon on these words, where he will see the most ingenious

Again, we read that our Saviour was in Egypt till the death of Herod, "that it might
" be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord
" by the Prophet, saying, out of Egypt have
" I called my son."

This is a citation from Hosea xi. 1. where it is thus introduced: "When Israel was a
" child, then I loved him, and called my son
" out of Egypt." וממצרים קראתי לבני. And then the Prophet adds, "as they have called
" them, so they went from them; they sacrificed unto Baalim, and burned incense to
" graven images. I taught Ephraim, also, to
" go, taking them by their arms," &c. The second and third verses, in our English translation, are by no means clear, or, indeed, intelligible; and may, agreeably to the original, be thus rendered, "They called them, (that is, the Prophets called them from their idolatry): howbeit, yet, or but *, they went from them; they sacrificed unto Baalim, and burned incense unto graven images, though † I

nious solution of this difficulty; but it is not satisfactory for the reasons above mentioned.

* The Hebrew particle בן is thus translated, 2 Chron. xxxii. 31. and Nahum i. 12.

† Thus the Hebrew י is rendered, Ruth ii. 13. Ezek. xiv. 18. and Zech. xii. 3.

" taught

“ taught Ephraim to go, taking them by their arms; but they knew not that I healed them,” &c. In this connection we cannot see the most distant reference to the Messiah.

In the foregoing chapter the Israelites are re-proved for their idolatry: in the first verse of this chapter Jehovah declares his regard for them notwithstanding; and, especially, that in former times, when Israel was a child, weak, feeble, and few in number, he loved him, took him to himself as a peculiar people; and brought him out of Egypt; that is, under the conduct of Moses and Aaron.

These words, we plainly see, are a declaration of an event long past, and not a prophecy of any thing future. This was the sense in which the passage was understood by the Greek translators*; for they have rendered it, *καὶ ἐξ Αἰγυπτίου μετεκαλεσα τὰ τέκνα αὐτοῦ*, “ *I have called his children, or sons, out of Egypt;*” and they, one would suppose, understood the Prophet’s meaning as well as Erasmus and some others,

L 2

who

* So it was also understood by Jonathan, and by the Arabic translators. See Sykes’s Essay on the Christian Religion, chap. 13.

who have found great fault with them for that translation *.

This passage I have reserved to the last, because it introduces a difficulty that I have never seen mentioned; that is, what necessity was there for Joseph, Mary, and Jesus, going into Egypt at all?

We must be somewhat particular in considering this part of the history.

St. Luke has given us a concise and clear account of the birth of Christ, and of some other transactions that followed, but not the most distant hint of several things mentioned in these chapters. He tells us “ that Jesus was
“ born at Bethlehem; that when eight days
“ were accomplished he was circumcised; that
“ when the days of Mary’s purification were
“ over, that is, at the end of forty days, he was

* Dr. Owen endeavours to shew that the Jews have corrupted this passage in both the Hebrew original and in the Septuagint, but as the prophet is plainly speaking of an event long past, as hath been shewn, his reasonings and his criticisms are, by no means, conclusive. Dr. Owen on the Septuagint, p. 82. note b. See also Dr. Kennicott Dissert. Gener. sect. 84—6, and Mr. Whiston’s Essay towards restoring the true text of the Old Testament, p. 88, &c. See also Carpzovius’s answer, p. 116.

“ brought

“ brought to Jerusalem †, and presented to the
 “ Lord ; and that when his parents had per-
 “ formed all things according to the law of the
 “ Lord, they returned into Galilee, to their
 “ *own* city Nazareth.” From hence it is
 evident that the flight into Egypt could not be
 from Bethlehem. If ever it took place, it must
 have been from Nazareth ; the intermediate
 time, between the birth of Jesus and his going
 to Nazareth, being fully accounted for by St.
 Luke.

The flight from Bethlehem was, therefore,
 impracticable ; and from Nazareth it was al-
 together unnecessary, because the slaughter of
 the infants did not extend so far. But let us
 hear the account given in this second chapter :
 “ When Herod saw that he was mocked of the
 “ wise men, he sent forth, and slew all the
 “ children which were in Bethlehem, and *in*

† If the wise men had been at Jerusalem before this
 time, and the chief priests had been gathered together
 by Herod ; Joseph and Mary were guilty of great rash-
 ness in exposing the child publicly there ; (see St.
 Luke's account) because Herod could not wish for a
 better opportunity to destroy him than this afforded him ;
 This part of their conduct cannot be vindicated, but
 upon the supposition that the law obliged them to it,
 and that they had a divine promise of safety.

“ *all the coasts thereof*, from two years old and
 “ under, according to the time which he had
 “ diligently enquired of the wise men.”

It is plain, from these words, that Herod's cruel command was founded upon an assurance that the infant Jesus continued at Bethlehem, at least, more than a year after his birth; and yet this could not be the case; for his stay there, as St. Luke expressly says, was but forty days. In this view of the matter, how shall we account for the order which Joseph received to flee into Egypt? What reason can be assigned for such a command? The child Jesus could not be in any danger from the fury of Herod, for he was at Nazareth in Galilee, far from Bethlehem, not *within its coasts*, to which bounds, we are told, the slaughter was confined*.

Is

* Mr. Whiston, in order to reconcile St. Matthew with St. Luke, supposes that the star appeared in the east at or before the conception of John the Baptist; that it moved towards Judea a little before the birth of Christ; that the wise men came to Jerusalem a little after; and went to Bethlehem within a few days more; that they offered their presents and returned home about a week afterwards; that Herod staid for them a week more; that he was then in a rage at his disappointment; that

Is it credible that God would send Joseph into Egypt, to be out of the way of Herod, who would not think of killing any children at Nazareth? Had the flight been the consequence

L 4

of

that Joseph was immediately sent into Egypt, by which time it was near a month after the nativity: the journey into Egypt, being 60 or 70 miles, took up three or four days more. Now Joseph, &c. staid in Egypt four days, and then returned to Jerusalem in four days more. Thus he supposes that the purification within the forty days required by the law was fulfilled, and then they went to Nazareth. *Harmony of the Four Evangelists, Corol. 2. p. 165. Cambridge, 1702.*

This hypothesis is founded on the supposition that our Saviour was born about a month before the death of Herod, which is by no means likely; for, according to the most judicious chronologists, he was born about three years before that event. See Mann's *Dissertation on the Birth of Christ*, and Dr. Lardner's *Credib.* part i. vol. ii. p. 962. Edit. 1788. vol. i. p. 423, &c. See, also, Wolzogen. *Com. in Matth.* p. 104, &c. The bare mentioning of this scheme to reconcile the evangelists is sufficient to confute it; for it is not possible, much less probable, that such a number of events could be accomplished within so short a time. However, if the flight was from Bethlehem, this Scheme must be the true one; for we have no room to imagine that Joseph, &c. returned thither after Jesus was presented in the temple. But if we suppose that it was from Nazareth, we are not clear of difficulties; for it is not at all likely that Joseph, in that case,

of Joseph's own apprehension for the child's safety, it might easily be accounted for; but there appears to be no necessity for his being warned of God to flee into Egypt. Supposing that Nazareth was under the jurisdiction of Herod, he never would think of sending his bloody order so far, about 80 miles, because he had been very lately told by the chief priests and scribes, that the Messiah was to be born in Bethlehem, about two miles distant from Jerusalem. There he might expect to find that infant of whom he was so much afraid, and not at so many miles distant from Bethlehem as Nazareth in Galilee.

St. Luke's account, which confines the stay of Joseph and Mary at Bethlehem to within forty days after the birth of Christ, throws, likewise, a fresh difficulty upon the history of the Magi. It is evident, from the relation of the affair, as we have it in the present copies of St. Matthew, that the visit of these wise men

case, would have been sent to Egypt, the road to which was through the heart of Herod's dominions, unless he had gone a long way about, with great expence and danger. Syria was much nearer to Nazareth, and the retreat would have been equally safe to the child. In short, this flight into Egypt is attended with peculiar difficulties.

was

was made at Bethlehem: but at what time was it made? Not, certainly, in the first forty days succeeding the birth of our Lord, because Herod's order, which was regulated by the information he had received from the Magi, included the slaughter of all the children who were under two years old, or, at least, had entered into the second year of their age. Now we cannot suppose that Herod could be very long before he knew that the wise men had departed into their own country, without returning to Jerusalem. As Bethlehem lay so near to Jerusalem, this was a fact which he must have been acquainted within a few days, indeed, hours, after it happened. The visit, therefore, of the Magi, must have been paid at a time, when, according to St. Luke, the child Jesus was not at Bethlehem.

Whoever impartially reflects upon all these things, will be ready to suspect, that chapters containing so many inexplicable difficulties, cannot be the work of an apostle.

Upon the whole, I apprehend, that the strongest evidences which can, at present, be produced in favour of the first and second chapters of St. Matthew, will scarce amount to a full proof of their authenticity.

S E C T.

S E C T. X.

An Attempt to account for the supposed Interpolation of these two Chapters.

SOME persons may, perhaps, be apprehensive that by the method of proceeding which I have pursued in the foregoing enquiry, the authority of the whole New Testament will be weakened: but to this I answer, that its credit will be better supported by a prudent defence of what never was, nor, in reason, can be questioned, than by a defence of every thing, without exception, that is found in the Canon, as it is now commonly received. Many pens have been employed in explaining the difficulties which are to be found in these two chapters; and it is well known that, from the contents of them, unbelievers have drawn their strongest objections to Christianity*. Indeed, it appears from what has been said in the preceding section, that their objections are not al-

* See Dr. Morgan's Letter in the Memoirs of Dr. Lardner, page 50, &c. Edition 1788, Appendix iv. vol. i. p. 132.

together

together groundless. If, therefore, we have some reasons to doubt the authenticity of this part of what is now deemed canonical, do we not, by laying *no* stress upon it, take away the very grounds of their objections?

It may be farther said, " that it is scarcely
 " possible to account for interpolations of this
 " nature in the sacred volume." But when it is considered that some parts of this volume were written *several* thousand years ago, it cannot be unreasonable to suppose, that it hath suffered, in a certain degree, from the injuries of time. Can it be a matter of wonder, that books so often copied by the pen, should, in the course of so many years, undergo a few changes and corruptions? In such circumstances, it is great weakness to expect that the sacred volume should be entirely free from errors. The passages referred to *in section the first*, have certain marks of interpolation; nor are they difficult to be accounted for. David, for instance, was the idol of the Jewish nation; and, therefore, it was not unlikely that some person, designing to do honour to his character, might draw up, from common report, an additional account of his favourite prince, and enlarge, more especially, on those particular parts of his history
 where

where he is first introduced into publick notice. Others, into whose hands the additional passages happened to fall, supposing that they had been omitted in the genuine history by mistake, might insert them in the places wherein they are now found. Thus they might get into a variety of copies; and, in process of time, be received as genuine parts of the sacred books, though the compiler never intended that they should.

The passage in St. John, ch. viii. concerning the adulterers, seems to have been inserted in that place, as a story related by Polycarp and others, from the mouth, as it was supposed, of the apostle John.

1 John v. 7. is evidently a late interpolation; and when we recollect the controversy about the Trinity, which for so many years destroyed the peace of the church, it cannot be difficult to account for its insertion.

They who may be desirous of knowing the reasons for which some parts of the present canon were rejected by several Christian churches, may consult the late reverend and learned Dr. Lardner's three supplemental volumes to the Credibility of the Gospel History. Edit. 1788. vol. vi.

But

But these general reasons may be thought insufficient to account for the addition of two whole chapters. However, when some circumstances are duly attended to, this will not appear either impossible, or very improbable. The Gospel by St. Matthew has been published above seventeen hundred years: Can it be said that, in so long a time, it could not have suffered any alteration? Some alteration might, certainly, have happened through mistake, or negligence. The transcribers of the sacred volume, when they discovered an error in their work, were not forward in rectifying it, lest it should hurt the sale of their copies; because, by the sale of their copies, many procured a subsistence, till the art of printing was discovered about three hundred years ago. Nor is it unreasonable to suppose, that some errors may have crept in through design. When any opinion was entertained which could not be proved by scripture authority, men might be ready to avail themselves of every opportunity which offered, of altering such passages as seemed to be conclusive against them *.

There

* This appears too visibly in the Alexandrian MS. in the British Museum, in which there are a multitude of erasures,

There are two ways by which the interpolation of the first and second chapters of St. Matthew may naturally be accounted for.

This Gospel, according to the voice of all antiquity, was originally published in Hebrew or Syro-chaldaic, a language in use only among the inhabitants of Palæstine, and the adjacent parts. When it was translated into Greek, the other Christians, not acquainted with the original language, depended altogether upon that version. It was, in general, faithfully made; liable to no material objection; and, therefore, soon acquired great repute. The little acquaintance which the body of Christians at that time had with the Syro-chaldaic tongue, left the translator * at liberty, to add, or, if he had been so disposed, to take away what he pleased, without much danger of detection. Supposing, then, that the translator of this Hebrew Gospel was a believing Jew, it is possible that he

erasures, in suspicious places; there are many places in which the erasures are filled up in a different hand from that of the MS. itself. This will appear to every one who looks over that valuable manuscript.

* It is well known that the ancients were fond of the wonderful and miraculous. He who will consult the Fathers will see abundant proofs of it.

Old

might think a few prophecies, cited from the Old Testament, by way of accommodation, would have considerable influence upon some of his unbelieving brethren *abroad*; who, having never seen the original, would naturally think that the Greek copy was, in every respect, a faithful translation of that original. However improper such quotations may now appear, yet, when we recollect that the ancients were not such accurate and close reasoners as the moderns, it will not, perhaps, be thought that our conjecture is altogether improbable. This, then, is not an unnatural way of accounting for the interpolation of these chapters.

Farther, this might easily have happened, without any the least design. These chapters might originally be no more than a kind of introduction to the Gospel of St. Matthew *, drawn up by the translator of it into Greek, and never intended by him to be considered as part of it †.

* That these two chapters are an introduction to St. Matthew's Gospel, drawn up by another hand, perhaps by the translator, is the opinion of some learned writers. See the Dissertation.

† The genealogy is now inserted apart, among some other preliminary pieces to St. Matthew's Gospel, in the Irish manuscript, mentioned above. See the preface to this 2d Edition.

When

When this Greek copy was spread abroad, those who knew nothing of the original, would naturally think, that, as it was called the Gospel by St. Matthew, it contained nothing but what was the authentic writing of that apostle: and, accordingly, it might be received as such in foreign countries; that is, in the countries out of Judea. After the death of the apostles and their companions, we do not find there were many persons in places at a distance from Palæstine, who had any knowledge of the Syro-chaldaic tongue. And let it be particularly observed, that there is no allusion to the first and second chapters of St. Matthew, which we can depend upon, in the writings of those Fathers who may be supposed to have understood that language.

When Origen, Jerom, &c. perceived that these chapters were wanting in the Ebionite Gospel, there was nothing unnatural in their supposing that they were left out with design: because the Ebionites, &c. were *then* considered as Heretics; and, of consequence, capable of any fraud or imposture. The Greek copy of St. Matthew soon got into reputation, because used by the generality of Christians; whereas the Syro-chaldaic copy was made use of only by
a few

a few poor Jewish converts in Palæstine, and these reputed enemies to the true faith. For that very reason the former copy would be thought of much greater authority than the latter *.

Upon the whole, what we have here advanced will naturally account for this supposed interpolation: especially when we recollect, that it is as reasonable for us to conceive that others added, as that the Ebionites, &c. omitted these chapters.

* See the Dissertation.

M

C O N-

C O N C L U S I O N.

THE reasons which seem to render the authenticity of the first and second chapters of St. Matthew's Gospel doubtful, have, to the best of my judgment, been fully and impartially stated. Care hath been taken to give a fair view of every argument and objection; nor am I conscious of my having been biaſſed to hide or misrepresent any fact that related to the subject of my enquiry. Now the matter is laid before the candid reader, let him judge for himself on which side the weight of evidence preponderates. But let him not be too hasty in his conclusions. To pronounce these chapters certainly spurious would be wrong; because they have now, for many centuries, been reckoned a part of the sacred canon; and to receive them, without hesitation, would be equally wrong, because their authority seems to have been questioned in very early times. In short, they should be placed in the same list with other controverted parts of the New Testament, and ought not to be

be produced as evidence in any point of doctrine, not supported by unquestionable parts of scripture.

I shall conclude with observing, that no one doctrine, or fact in Christianity will be affected by the omission of the first and second chapters of St. Matthew; for as to the genealogy, birth, &c. of Christ, we have, in St. Luke's Gospel, a full and consistent account of them: whereas these chapters contain scarcely any thing but what is attended with almost inexplicable difficulties.

A P P E N D I X.

WHEN the above enquiry was ready for the press, the author was advised by some friends to consult the second edition of Professor Michaelis's " Introductory Lectures " to the sacred Books of the New Testament : " and a learned gentleman, well acquainted with the German language, has been so obliging as to favour him with the following translation of what particularly relates to the present subject.

" I must here take notice of a very important question, concerning which we should be able to judge with more certainty, were we possessed of the Gospel of the Nazarenes ; and, at the same time, had more decisive proofs that it was St. Matthew's original Hebrew text. The matter stands thus :

" It

“ It is certain that the Gospel of the Ebionites had not the genealogy recorded in the first chapter of St. Matthew, and it is probable, that it had no part of either the first or second chapters.

“ Tatian, in his Harmony or Diatessaron, following, as it would seem, the Hebrew Gospel, left out the genealogy. In two summaries (capitulationes) and one abridgment (breviarium) of St. Matthew, published by Martianay, no mention is made of the genealogy of Christ.

“ In the manuscript of Mr. Eschenbach (at Nurembergh) St. Matthew's Greek Gospel begins at the 18th verse of the first chapter.

“ But what is of the greatest weight in this matter is, that St. Mark, who usually follows the steps of St. Matthew, omits the first and second chapters altogether.

“ One may easily perceive the doubt necessarily arising here, and how much the Gospel of the Nazarenes, whether it contained these chapters or not, if it was the text of St. Matthew, and was now extant, would contribute to the removal of it. But we labour under a perfect uncertainty where the Gospel of the

“ Nazarenes did begin; whether at the third
 “ chapter, or at chap. i. 18. or at the begin-
 “ ning of that chapter.

“ However, had these chapters been really
 “ wanting in St. Matthew’s original text,
 “ even then they ought not immediately to
 “ be rejected as an interpolation; for they may
 “ have been a separate writing of St. Matthew,
 “ designed by him to give an account of the
 “ childhood of Christ, to which he prefixed
 “ the title *Βιβλος γενεσεως*. To prevent its being
 “ lost as a separate composition, which might
 “ have happened, the translator, as it related
 “ to the same subject, might join it to the
 “ Gospel of St. Matthew *: And he had the
 “ same right to do it, as the Jews had to col-
 “ lect the twelve minor prophets into one vo-
 “ lume. This question, therefore, does not
 “ necessarily affect the canonical authority of
 “ these chapters, though they would, by one
 “ degree, be more certain, if the original He-
 “ brew text did, also, contain them.

“ In my opinion, they are by far the most
 “ difficult chapters in the New Testament,

* See above, p. 139, and below.

“ not so much on account of the seeming con-
 “ tradiction between this genealogy and that
 “ of St. Luke, which may be easily and effec-
 “ tually removed, as on account of the cita-
 “ tions here made out of the Old Testament ;
 “ for in these citations, I, at least, find more
 “ difficulties than in all the other passages
 “ cited in the New Testament from the Old.
 “ And I have found myself, more than once,
 “ necessitated to confess my ignorance, instead
 “ of giving an explanation of them.

“ Some persons, to save themselves trouble,
 “ may, perhaps, be inclined to reject these
 “ chapters altogether, as no part of St. Mat-
 “ thew's Gospel,

“ But though I readily grant every one this
 “ liberty, to get rid of difficulties with which
 “ he may be pressed; and though I think it
 “ very reasonable not to call in question the
 “ authority of the whole New Testament on
 “ account of a doubt which concerns only the
 “ authority of the first and second chapters of
 “ St. Matthew, but rather to distinguish the
 “ cause of these chapters, which are not to be
 “ found in some copies, and even omitted by
 “ St. Mark, from the cause of the New Testa-
 “ ment in general, and its divine inspiration :
 “ yet

“ yet this way of proceeding appears to me
 “ too bold, and too much resembling the con-
 “ duct of Alexander respecting the Gordian
 “ Knot.

“ This is, however, certain, that the an-
 “ cient church has delivered them to us as a
 “ part of the sacred writings; and no author,
 “ living after the destruction of Jerusalem,
 “ could have had the least temptation to pre-
 “ fix this genealogy to St. Matthew's Gospel.
 “ No, he would undoubtedly have chosen that
 “ of St. Luke, which, at that time, must have
 “ been known to all the Christians, rather than
 “ to forge, without any necessity, a genealogy
 “ that seemingly contradicts that of St. Luke,
 “ in a matter which, after the loss of the ge-
 “ nealogical tables, was one of the most un-
 “ interesting in all the world.”

This is what the ingenious and learned Pro-
 fessor hath advanced on this delicate subject,
 in his second volume, pages 1131, 1132, 1133,
 1134.

Though the chief arguments here produced,
 in favour of the authenticity of the first and
 second chapters of St. Matthew, have already
 been considered, it may, nevertheless be pro-
 per to make some remarks on this extract.

It

It is granted, as certain, that the Gospel of the Ebionites had not the genealogy, nor, probably, any part of these chapters. We have shewn that the Gospel of the Nazarenes did not very materially differ from the Gospel of the Ebionites; though this latter, as it would seem from the words of Epiphanius, was more corrupted than the former. If the Gospel of the Ebionites, therefore, had neither the genealogy, nor these suspected chapters, it is not probable that the Gospel of the Nazarenes had them. I am fully convinced, agreeably to the united testimony of all antiquity, that St. Matthew wrote his Gospel in Hebrew or Syro-chaldaic; and I am strongly inclined to believe that this was the very Gospel used by the Nazarenes. It is by no means unlikely that they should add some things to it derived from tradition, but it is hardly probable that they took any thing from it. If the Gospel of the Nazarenes, therefore, had not these chapters, I presume it to be almost certain, that they were wanting in St. Matthew's original copy.

The manuscript of Mr. Eschenbach gives us room to suspect the authenticity of the genealogy: but it is not a single evidence: for, as hath been observed above, there are other
manuscripts

manuscripts of St. Matthew's Gospel which begin at chap. i. 18, the Irish copy, which Mr. Toland saw, and two or three more, in the British Museum *. When we consider that the Ebionites were, before the days of Epiphanius, looked upon as heretics, it is by no means credible that they could have such a connection with foreign Christians as to prevail with any of them to receive their Gospel as the genuine work of St. Matthew, in opposition to another, universally acknowledged by the Christian Church †.

But our truly learned author supposes that the two first chapters might be a separate composition of St. Matthew, and prefixed by the translator to prevent its being lost.

Such a thing, certainly, might have been honestly done; but if the translator took this separate writing to have been the work of St. Matthew, I am inclined to think that he was deceived, for the following reasons:

The genealogy is remarkably inaccurate, during a period when, in the royal line at least, it seems to have been quite perfect: I mean

* See the Preface to this second Edition.

† See page 36.

from King David to the captivity. This point hath already been sufficiently considered. See above. Hence I conclude the exact reverse of the learned Professor; that is, that these chapters, and especially the genealogy, were compiled after the destruction of Jerusalem, when the public registers were destroyed.* The reason why the author did not insert St. Luke's genealogy is not my business to enquire. He might have many, which, at this distance of time, we cannot pretend to guess at.

Farther, I cannot easily persuade myself that an Evangelist would cite prophecies in the manner which has been done in the first and second chapters of St. Matthew. Perhaps the † translator of this Gospel into Greek might be the

* Notwithstanding what the learned professor says, I am convinced that the genealogy of Jesus, is and will be, of importance, until all the Jews are converted; for they must be satisfied that he was, unquestionably, a descendant of David; otherwise they will not receive him as their Messiah. The inaccuracy of the genealogy by St. Matthew, strongly inclines me to believe that it was drawn up after the public registers were destroyed.

† “ Marcus Matthæi Vestigia sequi solitus, et græce scribens, quæ tum modo Hebraice scripta a Matthæo
“ erant,

the author of these chapters, and might compile the whole of them from some private materials, which, as it would seem, from St. Luke's introduction, were very numerous in those days.

It is observable, that our learned Professor himself is rather diffident of the strength of his arguments to prove the authenticity of these chapters; for he says, that he will grant every one liberty to reject them altogether, if he cannot any other way get rid of the difficulties contained in them. By the way, the Professor himself acknowledges that he cannot solve these difficulties. With submission to a character so justly distinguished in the Republic of Letters, I am of opinion, that to declare our suspicions concerning the first and second chapters of St. Matthew, though we do not absolutely

“erant, sed libere atque ut sua; integra duo Capita prima
 “Matthæi non habuisse videtur. Videntur esse Liber
 “singularis ac suus, a *græco interprete* cum Evangelio
 “Matthæi conjunctus; ergo horum Capitum Causa, a
 “Causa religionis separanda; nec, si in his Capitibus
 “multa sunt suspecta, ac citata veteris Testamenti
 “parum concinentia, non in Suspicionis Societatem
 “vocandæ sunt reliquæ partes novi Testamenti.” Anonymous.—See Dr. Owen on the four gospels; and the Dissertation.

reject

reject them, is rather the wisest and best step we can take in defending the cause of Christianity. In that case, the adversary to revelation must not pretend to urge the difficulties in these chapters, as any way affecting the truth of the Gospel in general, till he has proved that they really are a genuine part of it.

Our learned author concludes with saying, that the ancient church has delivered these chapters to us as a part of the sacred writings.

In answer to this it may be said, that we have no certain evidence of these chapters being known in the church, till about the middle of the second century.

F I N I S.

